DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 658 EC 302 848

AUTHOR	Harris, Carolyn DeMeyer; McKinney, David D.
TITLE	Project PARTnership: A Model Program for Promoting Self-Determination through Participation in the Arts. Final Report [and] Teacher's Visual Sampler.
INSTITUTION	VSA Educational Services, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Sep 93
NOTE	125p.; For the instructional kit, see EC 302 849. Project Partnership videotape profiling the lives of three artists with disabilities not available from ERIC.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Art Education; *Art Expression; Artists; Creative Dramatics; Creative Writing; Curriculum Development; Dance; Demonstration Programs; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Individualized Education Programs; Individualized Instruction; Music Education; Photography; *Self Determination; Social Integration; Student Development; Training; Visual Arts
IDENTIFIERS	Very Special Arts Festivals

ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities of Project PARTnership, a 3-year demonstration program to develop the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of young people with disabilities through increased participation in the arts. Key program elements included: (1) development of a new course and adaptation of existing curricula to increase accessibility of arts education to students with disabilities; (2) training of school faculty, community arts leaders, and parents to increase their understanding of the value of arts education for students with disabilities; (3) involvement of artists with disabilities as performers, trainers, role models, and mentors; (4) establishment of a support network to encourage students with disabilities to pursue their interests in the arts and to promote their integration into school and community arts programming; and (5) development and implementation of an Individual Arts Education Plan as part of each student's Individual Education Plan process. The project coordinated with Very Special Arts organizations and implemented the program at sites in Louisiana; Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Nevada; New Hampshire; and New Mexico. The core course involves 20 to 50 sessions of instruction in the visual arts, dance and creative movement, music, drama, or creative writing. The project also developed an instructional kit, a videotape, and a teacher's visual sampler. Most of this document consists of a third-party year three evaluation report and final reports from the nine implementation sites. The visual sampler, which is appended, provides an illustrated introduction to the program. (DB)

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ED 405 658

Project PARTnership: A Model Program for Promoting Self-Determination Through Participation in the Arts

Final Report

For:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

EC 302448

VSA
Educational
Services

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Project *PART*nership: A Model Program for Promoting Self-Determination Through Participation in the Arts

Final Report

For:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Dr. Michael Ward, Project Officer

Grant CFDA #84.158K

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September 1993

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Project P*ART*nership: A Model Program for Promoting Self-Determination Through Participation in the Arts

Final Report

OVERVIEW

Project P*ART*nership is a three-year demonstration program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). It is designed to develop and enhance the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of young people with disabilities through increased participation in the arts. Based on the premise that arts involvement affords new opportunities to explore and develop a sense of oneself, Project P*ART*nership uses school and community resources to increase opportunities for self-discovery, creativity, self-concept building, skill development, and social integration through increased participation in the arts. Key elements of the program include:

- The development of a new course and adaptation of existing curricula to increase accessibility of arts education to students with disabilities.
- The training of school faculty, community arts leaders, and parents to increase their understanding of the value of arts education for students with disabilities.
- The involvement of artists with disabilities as performers, trainers, role models, and mentors.
- The establishment of a network of support that encourages students with disabilities to pursue their interests in the arts and to promote their integration into the full range of school and community-based arts programming.
- The development and implementation of an Individual Arts Education Plan (IAEP) as part of each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) process.

Through these activities, Project P*ART*nership offers significant benefits both to individual students and to the educational system. In particular, the IAEP (based on the federally mandated IEP) allows students to determine their interests and to devise a strategy to make the most of individual talents and capabilities. At the same time, schools are better able to provide equal service to students with disabilities by systematically identifying barriers to participation in the arts and implementing a plan to remove them.

OBJECTIVES

The principal goal of Project P*ART*nership is to involve adolescents with disabilities in their schools and communities, thereby preparing them to lead independent lives as adults. Key objectives of the program are:

- ***To build a coalition of school, community and family, working together to establish and maintain a vital arts program for young people with disabilities that is fully integrated within the educational, social, and artistic community.*** To meet this objective, the National Office of Very Special Arts (VSA), in collaboration with VSA state affiliates, established steering committees at each of the nine project sites. These committees were comprised of teachers, service providers, parents, and students. Each committee established a network within the school system and throughout the community for supporting and promoting arts involvement for persons with disabilities.

- ***To develop a model for the systematic examination and elimination of barriers to full arts participation by secondary school students with disabilities.*** VSA developed a site assessment tool to help the sites identify barriers that inhibit full arts participation by individuals with disabilities. Once barriers were identified, VSA worked with administrators, faculty, and community arts leaders to provide support, resources, and opportunities to remove barriers that prohibit or hinder participation in the arts.

- ***To develop curricula which expand arts opportunities for young people with disabilities.*** The core curriculum "Self-Determination Through the Arts" was developed during Year 1 of the project and field tested during Years 2 and 3. The core course (50 arts activities) was designed to teach self-determination skills through creative experiences in a wide variety of arts modalities. As part of the development process of the course, VSA worked with teachers to adapt existing arts curriculum materials to the model, to teach students with disabilities various art forms while enhancing their self-determination skills. The course can be delivered as part of a school's special education or vocational program, an after school program, or as a community arts education program.

- ***To implement an individual arts education plan as part of the secondary school education planning process for young people with disabilities.*** Through participation in the core course, each student's arts interest, talents, and capabilities were identified. Teachers, together with students, developed an IAEP where arts education objectives and strategies/resources for meeting those objectives were identified, then incorporated into the student's existing IEP.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Project Sites
Very Special Arts-Louisiana: Mazie Malveaux, Executive Director
Barbara Colthrap
Very Special Arts-Ohio: Mark Foradori, Executive Director
Gary DeVault
Very Special Arts-Nevada: Mary Ellen Horan, Executive Director
Very Special Arts-New Hampshire: Deborah Stuart, Executive Director
Perkins Foss
Very Special Arts-New Mexico: Beth Rudolph, Executive Director
Dana Armstrong, Deborah Mashibini, Pam Musser, Julian Viescas
Washington [DC] Very Special Arts: L. Lawrence Riccio, Ed.D., Executive Director
Katherine Shaughnessy

Staff, Students, Visiting Artists at Project Sites
Hamilton County, OH: Teresa Adkins, Clinton Bean, Rick Carson, Stephanie Carson, Callie Cary, Hal Gunderson, Tom Jordan, Deborah Kendrick, Sue Samoviski, Bernard Solomon, Tom Sparough, Joyce Zeigler

Wayne County, OH: James Acord, Julie Anderson, Henry Bishop, Chris Cikra, Diana Eachus, Tim Frye, Carolyne Haynes, Jenny Lauber, Carli Moorefield, Leslie Pearce-Keating, Penny Mendenhall-Stone, Mike Peterson, Sam Sheller, Susan Shie, Andrew Spencer, Rick Warner, Karen Wood, Louise Yaksich

Istrouma High School, Baton Rouge, LA: Kerry Curtin, Pudd Carpenter, James Edwards, Donnie Faye Hull, John Hunter, Elisha Jackson, Ramona Laws, Albert Odell, Carrie Saia, Mona Lisa Saloy, Theresa Trelles, Kathie Trouquille, Shala Thibodaux, William Young, Weston Welch, Bridgette Williams

Warren Easton High School, New Orleans, LA: Gail Armant, Rebecca Bradford, Jean Demas, Rosalynne Dennis, Mary DeRouen, Lee Dixon, Rhonda Guillory, Maria Hayes, Candice Kent, Charles Johnson, Ruby Jordan, Andrew Lee, Alexina Medley, Joyce Melancon, Dianne Montagne, Sonya Robinson, Linda Talbot, Michael Torregano, Kathleen Wiegand, Patricia Walker, Doris White, Sherrel White, Lynn Wooldridge, Lenell Young

Hug High School, Reno, NV: Terry Arcularius, Russel Dudley, Mike Ellis, CeCe Gable, Chris McCulley, Susan Walker

Brentwood High School, Merrimack, NH: Conrad Dumas, Dwight Graves, Althea Haropolus, Kelly Doremus-Stuart, Laura Campbell, Martha Hastings, Keith Howard, Terri Smith, Mimi White

Albuquerque High School, Albuquerque, NM: Sylvia Abeyta, Roberta Aragon, Leon Bartels, Joanie Carlisle, Steve Chavez, Verna Garcia, Kerin Gitlin, Sara Hutchinson, Jackie M., Irene Oliver-Lewis, Zimbabwe Nkenya, Sally Pacheco, Diana Parra, Linda Plank, Tom Savage, Lorraine Solano, Barbara Schwyzer, Shirley Thompson, Sam Tubiolo, Tom Venardos, Susan Williamson

Mamie D. Lee School, DC: Jude Crannitch, Malaya Rucker, Linda Suber, Rachelle Washington, Steven Young, Natalie Pratt Zale

Spingarn High School, DC: Janna King, Audrey Penn, Jennifer Rheeling, Ethel Richmond, Malaya Rucker

Artists Appearing in Project PARTnership Video
Chris Burke, Michael Naranjo, Mary Verdi-Fletcher

City Lights School, Inc. & Program Evaluators
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- ***To increase awareness of the importance of self-determination and the arts in the lives of young persons with disabilities among faculty, parents and community service providers.*** VSA provided in-service training for faculty, parents, and community service providers to increase their understanding of the importance of self-determination skills in the lives of persons with disabilities, and to increase their understanding of the role of the arts in the acquisition of such skills.

- ***Develop and disseminate a national model for transferring this demonstration program to other schools and communities through VSA organizations nationwide.*** VSA implemented qualitative and quantitative evaluation processes to measure the project's impact on the acquisition of self-determination skills and the impact of the project on the school systems and their communities at large. In addition, VSA developed a Project P*ART*nership Instructional Kit with a companion video for national dissemination through VSA affiliate organizations. This kit was designed to allow state and local VSA affiliates, school systems and community arts facilities to implement similar programs in their jurisdictions

SITES

VSA worked with its national network of affiliates to execute Project P*ART*nership at a variety of location and with diverse audiences. During each year of the program, sites were added.

- Year 1 operated with VSA Louisiana and VSA Ohio to participate in developing the original framework and activities for Project P*ART*nership;

- Year 2 added a Washington, DC, high school to field test the first set of arts activities and assist with the production of a videotape that profiles lives of three artists with disabilities;

- Year 3 added VSA Nevada, VSA New Hampshire, VSA New Mexico, and VSA Washington, DC, to field test the program and to generate additional activities for the manual.

To ensure a proper mix of ethnicity and demographics, individual sites ranged from the inner city schools of Washington, DC, to rural communities of Ohio and American Indian populations in New Mexico and Nevada.

SITE IMPLEMENTATION

Project *PARTnership* emphasized coordination among school, community, and family resources to expand arts opportunities for students with disabilities. At each site, the program was guided by representatives from each of these groups, as well as participation by students with and without disabilities. The establishment of each program site involved these keys activities:

- **Establish a Site Steering Committee**, composed of the VSA state director, school district administrator, building principal, special education and arts instructors, community arts advocates, and student and parent representatives. VSA National presented an orientation workshop to each steering committee for discussion of project goals, objectives, and activities. Each steering committee then conducted a site assessment to assist schools in recognizing and identifying barriers to full participation of students with disabilities in arts courses. Based on this assessment, the committee developed a plan for eliminating barriers that limit arts participation by the students.

- **Implement Project *PARTnership* model** that includes (a) developing an IAEP; (b) training school faculty, community arts leaders, and parents to increase understanding of the value of arts; (c) teaching the core course in various art areas; (d) designating a lead teacher who monitors core course sessions and conducts the Partnership Group session; and (e) developing and field testing new activities.

- **Involve artists with disabilities** as performers, trainers, role models, and mentors.

- **Schedule program activities**, including field trips, for a variety of community events; present special performances and workshops by guest artists; focus in-school workshops on the importance of building self-determination and self-expression and providing an effective motivational tool for the participants.

- **Establish an ongoing network of support** to encourage students with disabilities to continue their involvement with the full range of school and community based arts programs.

- **Participate in evaluation activities,** which examine program effects through use of formal and informal instruments, self-report, and observation. Sites administered, on a pre- and posttest basis, the *Torrance Test of Creativity*, and the *Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale* to provide quantitative data on individual student levels of creativity, self-concept, and independent living skills. Art instructors rated the

effectiveness of each core course activity using the Activity Evaluation Log. Sites cooperated with a third-party evaluator, who collected and analyzed data from the various sources, including the Steering Committee, and prepared an evaluation report.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Project P*ART*nership was initiated to increase societal integration for youth with disabilities. As part of this goal, Project P*ART*nership was designed as a transitional program for adolescents. This consideration guided selection of participants. Approximately 18 to 25 high school students with various disabilities participated in the program at each project site. They were identified by the site's special education staff and other faculty. The criteria for selecting participants considered whether potential students are:

- Able to attend class on a regular basis:
- Likely to participate in and contribute to small group sharing experiences;
- Interested in participating in the project's extracurricular activities; and
- Likely to benefit from opportunities to participate in the arts.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Core Course

The core course, *Self-Determination and the Arts,* introduces the importance of self-determination skills in the lives of young adults with disabilities, and the role of the arts in the acquisition of such skills. The course involves a total of 20 to 50 sessions, with approximately three to four sessions devoted to instruction in each modality -- visual arts, dance and creative movement, music, drama, and creative writing. Within each session, students have the opportunity to:

- Learn an art skill (e.g., pantomime, creating a rhythm, using the technique of watercolor);
- Learn and practice self-determination skills; and
- Express how they personally feel or what they think about something that is important to them.

A unique feature of Project P*ART*nership is that this curriculum framework can be applied to many standard arts activities. Teachers and artists can *map* the P*ART*nership framework onto other activities. The basics of this three-step framework are described below.

- *Step 1: Activity Mapping*: To provide the teacher/artist with an approach for extending an arts activity to include the self-determination skills of planning, setting personal goals, making choices, demonstrating independence and self-sufficiency, initiating interactions with others, and self-evaluation.

  a. Select activity, e.g., printmaking;

  b. Build on a theme, e.g., living independently;

  c. Link activity and theme, e.g., decorating personal room through printmaking;

  d. Focus all elements of art form toward theme, e.g., use of color, pattern, shape in decorating the room; and

  e. Develop action plan, e.g., materials and activities needed to accomplish goal.

- *Step 2: Student Review of Activity*: To help each student feel secure and self-sufficient with the activity or art technique through comment or reaction to the art form and what he or she might communicate through it.

  a. Think about individual idea and why it was chosen;

  b. Decide what is needed to communicate idea to self and/or others;

  c. Determine what is to be learned from activity;

  d. Resolve any unanswered questions or issues before beginning; and

  e. Create a portfolio of all activity planning, assessments, samples, personal reactions, etc.

- *Step 3: Partnership Group:* To serve as a public forum for self-expression after group sets ground rules and norms for participation.

  a. Share individual work;

  b. Tell others about what is being expressed through the work;

c. Give/receive feedback;

d. Assess whether personal goals met; and

e. Assess value of activity.

Teacher's Visual Sampler

The three-step *mapping* framework is also documented in the *Teacher's Visual Sampler*, a photo-essay booklet of the five arts areas. This product provides both a systematic method for adapting arts activities as well as a visual stimulus to future users who are interested in implementing Project P*ART*nership, but who will not be able to receive the hands-on training and technical assistance delivered under the grant.

Videotape

The videotape produced in year 2 also emphasizes the important link between self-determination and the arts. The video profiles the lives of three artists with disabilities: Chris Burke, a musician and television actor from the series "Life Goes On," who was born with Down's Syndrome and who speaks to young people about striving for dreams; Michael Naranjo, a professional sculptor who was blinded in Vietnam and who conducts clay workshops for students with special needs; and Mary Verdi-Fletcher, a dancer who was born with spina bifada and who founded Dancing Wheels and conducts workshops and performances in wheelchair dance.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of all the model demonstration projects, and Project P*ART*nership decided to work with a third-party evaluator from City Lights School. As an ongoing activity of the project, the evaluation focused on both qualitative and quantitative data. In general, the evaluation plan consisted of process and outcome evaluation strategies.

The process evaluation considered programmatic features of the project and examined whether the program was implemented as intended. It included a profile of the site and students, a summary of services provided, characteristics and workloads of the staff members, and staff and student evaluations of the program. The results of the process evaluation from the first two years were used to improve program delivery and to serve as a guide in implementing the approach at other sites.

The outcome evaluation focused on the extent to which anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of participation in Project P*ART*nership were

attained. The research questions focused on determining increases in self-esteem and self-determination, improvement in levels of creativity and personal expression, and reduction in number and extent of barriers in site communities.

The following instruments were used to collect data for Project P*ART*nership:

- *Activity Evaluation Logs* -- completed by course instructors immediately after conducting a class activity. The log was designed to assess the impact of the activity on student participation and to determine any modifications that were necessary.

- *Student Activity Plans* -- used after an activity was introduced to the class and served as a guideline to help students formulate ideas for class projects. With assistance from the instructor, students used this form to focus on appropriate goals and plan steps to achieve them.

- *Student Self-Assessment Questionnaire* -- designed to be completed after each arts activity. This questionnaire was used as a tool to get students to think about how they feel about their experiences.

- *Preliminary Site Assessment* -- conducted by the Steering Committee at each site. It provided information about current special education opportunities and student involvement in arts programs against which to measure project effectiveness with expanded student participation. This instrument also helped determine how effective the school was in removing barriers to arts participation by special education students by comparing data collected before and after the project implementation.

- *Student Pre- and Posttest Measures* -- collected from students enrolled in the course. These standardized instruments were used to test creativity and self-concept. The *Torrance Test of Creativity* - Figural Test is a tool used to identify and measure creative potential among individuals in grades K-12. The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* is used to measure self-concept in students grade 4-12.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

The development and delivery of this model demonstration project was structured in four phases: The primary activities within each phase were:

- **Planning and Development:** This first phase focused on the systematic examination of barriers that prevent students with disabilities from participating fully in school and related community arts education.

After a thorough examination of these barriers, a core curriculum was developed to make courses and school activities more accessible to students with disabilities.

- **Implementation**: This phase began with the delivery of the core course in spring 1991, with full implementation following over the next two years of the project. The major feature of this phase was the development of an IAEP for each student participating in the program. This plan was incorporated in the existing IEP process and set arts education objectives for each student.

- **Evaluation:** To provide adequate feedback on the effectiveness of the core curriculum, participants were tested prior to implementation of the program and posttested at the end of each of the three years of the demonstration program. Because of the importance of this information to both the program and to the students, the evaluation process was developed as a component of the project.

- **Dissemination:** VSA developed "Project P*ART*nership: A Model Program Guide" (consisting of a step-by-step implementation manual and videotape) for dissemination through its network of affiliates in all 50 states, and through other active U.S. Department of Education model demonstration projects across the country. In addition, VSA Educational Services created a visual sampler of the program to distribute to interested teachers, schools, and organizations which might not receive the complete implementation guide.

A number of the complete packages are available on a cost recovery basis. Each package includes:

- *Project PARTnership: Instructional Kit*
  [3-ring binder with project background, forms, and 50 activities in creative drama, visual arts, dance/movement, creative writing, photography, & music]

- *Project PARTnership: Video*
  [Three Artists Talk About Self-Determination Through the Arts]

- *Project PARTnership: Teacher's Visual Sampler*
  [20-page booklet of photographs & core framework for implementing Project PARTnership model]

A check or money order for $10.00, payable to VSA Educational Services, should be mailed to:

VSA Educational Services
ATTN: Nilda Johns, Finance
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Year 1 Activities

During Year 1, VSA National Office in cooperation with VSA Ohio and VSA Louisiana piloted Project P*ART*nership in two model sites: Istrouma High School in Baton Rouge, LA, and Hamilton High School in Hamilton, OH. The model arts curriculum, "Self-Determination Through the Arts," was developed at these sites and served as the core course for the remainder of the project. Each arts activity was designed to provide the students with opportunities to set a goal and a plan to accomplish it, to make choices, to work independently and with peers, to initiate plans, and to self-evaluate. A key component of each activity session was the Partnership Group which served as a forum for self expression. Through group sharing and interaction, the students could experience taking appropriate risks, self-advocacy, problem solving, and expressing their viewpoints and feelings. They also practiced such skills as listening, respecting others, and giving others constructive criticism.

Year 2 Activities

Year 2 saw three additional project sites established at Warren Easton High School in New Orleans, LA, The Wayne Arts Center/Wayne County Schools in Wooster, OH, and Spingarn Senior High School in Washington, DC. School administrators and teachers throughout the various school districts of the five sites were enthusiastic and committed to implementing the project in line with the project's objectives and testing the major activities. Since an important component of the project was the workshops given by visiting artists with disabilities, VSA produced a companion video to assist sites that wish to implement the project but do not have access to national trainers who happen to have disabilities. This thirty minute video featuring three artists with disabilities may be used as a motivational tool to provide students with role models who have developed their self-determination skills through the arts.

Year 3 Activities

Year 3 saw the arts course and videotape field tested in nine sites and additional materials developed. VSA Educational Services field tested the

project materials in four new project sites: one each in New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, and Washington, DC. Based upon the results of field testing, the core course activities for the Instructional Kit were refined and increased to 50. In addition, VSA Educational Services created a visual sampler that presents the Project P*ART*nership framework in the areas of visual arts, dance and creative movement, music, drama, and creative writing. A complete package of Project P*ART*nership materials -- instructional kit, videotape, and visual sampler -- is being disseminated through the VSA network of affiliates in all 50 states and through active OSERS model demonstration projects across the country. In addition, a limited number of the complete packages is available on a cost-recovery basis through VSA Educational Services.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the three-year development of Project P*ART*nership represents only the beginning of this program. Through disseminating the instructional kit, videotape, and visual sampler, the project promises to continue to flourish. Of the test sites which helped to develop the program, two sites have committed to continue the program and the two Washington, DC, sites are still searching for funds to continue the program. In addition, there also have been inquiries from organizations outside the VSA network about the project.

This interest is gratifying and indicates the need for the continuation of Project P*ART*nership. Some issues of concern do arise, however, regarding training and evaluation.

As part of the demonstration project, a specialist from the National Office of VSA trained the steering committee for each site. With the end of the grant, there will be no funds to continue this training. While the design of the materials is intended to provide the user with sufficient information to fully and competently implement the program, the lack of direct training may contribute to uneven implementation at new sites. If feedback from new users indicates the need for training, VSA will investigate funding sources to hold a train-the-trainers workshop, perhaps in conjunction with VSA national conference so that a VSA staff member in each state would be trained in the implementation of Project P*ART*nership.

The evaluation component, which was considered an integral part of the project, was included from the planning stage to preclude giving short shrift to this important element. The goal was collection of sound, useful quantitative and qualitative data. The standardized instruments selected to provide pre and post quantitative measures of creativity and self-concept did

not result in strong nor consistent data, and we would not recommend their use by future program implementers. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were considered more useful in describing both the planning and implementation activities and the participants' involvement and reactions. Results were predominantly positive with the sites indicating considerable student growth in the areas of self planning, action, monitoring and problem solving, and evaluation. In relation to the principal goal of Project P*ART*nership -- to involve adolescents with disabilities in activities in their schools and communities that will help prepare them to lead independent lives as adults -- the sites endorse this as a useful program that really did help increase the self-determination skills of their students.

APPENDIX A

Third-Party Year 3 Evaluation Report

Very Special Arts Project *Part*nership:

A Model Program Encouraging Self-Determination Through Access to the Arts

CFDA #84.158

1993 Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to
The U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services

Submitted by
Very Special Arts

Gila R. Shusterman, M.A.
Bert L'Homme, Ph.D.
City Lights School
Third-Party Evaluators
September, 1993

Very Special Arts Project *Part*nership: A Model Program Encouraging Self-Determination Through Access to the Arts

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Self-determination, the ability to make choices and act on one's own behalf, is key to empowering individuals to become competent and independent. Participation in the arts is an effective strategy for developing self-expression, achieving self-realization, improving communication, and attaining meaningful participation in school and community activities. But students with disabilities often lack access to the full range of school and community-based arts programs. Because of attitudinal, physical and programmatic barriers, individuals with disabilities have not had equal opportunity to pursue their interests in the arts and discover their individual talents and capabilities.

To address this need, Very Special Arts (VSA) has developed **Project *Part*nership**, a model demonstration program designed to enhance the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of young people with disabilities through increased participation in the arts. This program evolved and grew continually over the course of its three years. This report is based on the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the third program year.

Project Goals and Objectives

Project *Part*nership's general goal is to significantly benefit both the individual student and the educational system. The program seeks to provide students with disabilities with enhanced opportunities for self-discovery, creativity, self-concept building, skill development, and social integration through exposure to the arts. By systematically identifying barriers to participation in the arts and implementing a plan to remove them, schools will be better able to provide equal service to all students, including those with disabilities. The program also seeks to develop systems within each community which utilize school and other local resources to support and sustain ongoing participation in the arts by all students with disabilities.

The main process objectives of the program are the following:

- To use the arts as a vehicle to teach students with disabilities self-determination skills they will need to function independently as adults;
- To increase awareness of the importance of self-determination and the arts in the lives of young persons with disabilities among faculty, parents, and community service providers; and
- To build a coalition of school, community, and family working together to establish and maintain a vital arts program for young people with disabilities that is fully

integrated within the educational, social, and artistic community.

II. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan for Project Partnership consists of a *process evaluation* and an *outcome evaluation*. The purpose of the process evaluation is to determine whether the program has been implemented as planned. The purpose of the outcome evaluation is to determine the extent to which anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of participation in Project Partnership are attained.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation includes a profile of the clients, a summary of the services given, characteristics of the staff members and clients. The results of the process evaluation can be used to improve program delivery and eventually as a guide in replicating the Project Partnership approach elsewhere.

Outcome Evaluation

Specifically, two types of outcomes are being evaluated: (1) the impact of Project Partnership on individual students who participated in the program, and (2) the impact on the school and educational systems in which Project Partnership took place.

Impact on Students. The project seeks to influence participant's outcomes by developing and enhancing their self-determination and self-advocacy skills. Such individual enrichment includes self discovery, communication, self concept, skill development, and social interaction.

These outcomes are assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative evaluation is conducted through measures of self-determination and creativity with the Piers Harris and the Torrance. Qualitative evaluation is conducted through interviews with the students themselves, their parents, teachers and program administrators, and observation of students during their participation in the program.

Impact on Schools and Communities. These outcomes are assessed qualitatively, through interviews with teachers and program administrators.

Evaluation Design

This evaluation is based on a one group, pretest-posttest design, with each Project Partnership site considered separately. Because all the sites differed in their implementation

of Project P*art*nership, it would not be appropriate to combine them in the quantitative analysis, even though all programs were based on the same model. In the qualitative analysis, the experiences of staff and students at all sites are combined and described together.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative Data Collection

Students who participated in the program were given the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the Torrance Test of Creativity prior to their participation in the program, and then again after the program was completed. These instruments were used to test three areas: creativity, self-concept, and independent living skills.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, revised in 1984, is widely used to measure self-concept in students grades 4-12, with 80 yes or no response items. The test is written at the third grade reading level and may be administered individually or in groups.

The Torrance Test of Creativity can be used to identify and measure creative potential among students grades K-12. The Figural Test is a largely nonverbal paper and pencil exam which has been referenced to norms in such areas as fluency, originality, elaboration, and resistance to closure. An overall creativity rating is also determined.

Qualitative Data Collection

Toward the end of the program year, the third-party evaluator visited the sites and interviewed key personnel, students and parents who participated in the program. The sites that received visits, and thus were included in the qualitative analysis, were chosen primarily for consistency. The initial sites in Hamilton, Ohio and Baton Rouge, Louisiana were visited during all three years of their program, and the sites in Wayne County and New Orleans were visited during their second and third years. During the third year, additional sites in New Hampshire, Nevada and New Mexico were added. Because funding allowed only one of those sites to be visited, the site in New Hampshire was chosen[1].

A number of measures that were developed for this evaluation were used only primarily as tools for development of the Project P*art*nership curriculum. The activity evaluation logs, the lesson plan forms, the preliminary site assessments and the student assessments, according to the comments of key personnel, were collected by some of the sites but not consistently by all the sites. These forms were not provided to third-party evaluator, and were not included in analyses for this evaluation report. This evaluation is

[1] For more information on the sites that were not visited, as well as all the forms used in Year 3 of the project, please see the final project report submitted by VSA Educational Services.

based solely on the qualitative information collected during five site visits, and on quantitative test scores.

III. PROCESS EVALUATION

Of interest in the process evaluation is whether the program was implemented as it was intended to. This process evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative components, and provides specific information about how the program was implemented at each site, and how the particular characteristics of each site were adapted to the needs of Project *Part*nership.

Quantitative Process Evaluation

Five sites were visited during this third year of Project *Part*nership (see Table 1). Two of these sites were the original Project *Part*nership sites that began operating in Project *Part*nership's first year and were in their third year of operation. Two sites were in their second year of operation, and one was in its first.

Table 1.

City, State	School	Year of Project	Total Students
Wayne County, Ohio	Wayne County Schools	2	31
Hamilton, Ohio	Hamilton High School	3	19
New Orleans, Louisiana	Warren Easton	2	28
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	Istrouma High School	3	18
Merrimack, New Hampshire	Brentwood School	1	25

The number of students who participated in Project *Part*nership at each site that was visited ranged from 18 at Istrouma to 31 at Wayne County Schools. The types of disabilities of these students also varied greatly. Table 2 shows the number of students at each of the sites in each of the disability categories.

Qualitative Process Evaluation

Qualitatively, of interest is what happened during the delivery of the program. This information is intended to be useful to anyone who is interested in adopting the Project *Part*nership curriculum in other settings. Project *Part*nership was implemented in a wide

variety of school environments. In each site, the Project Partnership staff adapted the Project Partnership curriculum to the unique needs of their school and community. Thus, the 3-year Project Partnership program has resulted in a wealth of field experience which will be valuable to anyone intending to use Project Partnership in their own schools.

Table 2.

Disability	Wayne County	Hamilton	Istrouma	Warren Easton	Brentwood
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders			2	3	11
Learning Disabilities	2		4	13	4
Orthopedic Disabilities		6		5	
Developmental Disabilities	27	8			
Hearing/Speech/Language Impairment				1	
Vision Impairment				1	
Multiple Disabilities		5	12	5	10
Other Health Impairment	2				
Total Students	31	19	18	28	25

Diversity of Project Partnership Settings

The school settings in which Project Partnership was implemented varied greatly across the five sites.

The Wayne County, Ohio, site, in a very rural area, included students who were brought together from schools around the county for special education services at two sites, and these students were brought together for Project Partnership activities. The activities took place primarily at the Wayne Center for the Arts. This beautifully restored old building has a very "homey" atmosphere and a friendly and welcoming staff. The range of artistic resources available there is impressive, and the setting seems ideal for engendering creativity among young people. At the other sites, the activities took place primarily at the schools, with the exception of various field trips.

Warren Easton Fundamental Senior High School is a large public high school not far

from downtown New Orleans. Istrouma High School is a large public high school in Baton Rouge. The Brentwood School is a very small, alternative school for emotionally disturbed adolescents in rural New Hampshire. Hamilton High School is a large public high school in an urban area of the small city of Hamilton, Ohio. At both Louisiana schools, the student body was primarily African-American; at both Ohio schools and at the New Hampshire school, the student body was primarily white.

Student Participation

The Lead Teacher at each site typically recruited students who they felt would benefit from participating in Project P*art*nership. In some cases, the students were given the opportunity to participate if they chose to, and in other cases the students were simply assigned to the course.

At Wayne County Schools, there were three groups of students: The first group was comprised of students from all over the county who came to the career center for special education classes in the morning, and then they worked in the food services division in the afternoon. The second group were special education students from all over the county who come to Smithville High School for their full day of school, and had some classes together and are mainstreamed for some of their courses. These two groups were assigned to the Project P*art*nership course every Friday. The third group was comprised of 7 students from within the various vocational programs at the Career Center (i.e., food services, horticulture, medical/dental technology) who also received special educational services. These students had been given the option to participate in Project P*art*nership and chose to do so.

In Hamilton, students with multiple handicaps and orthopedic handicaps were in a self-contained classroom. Students with developmental handicaps were in a homeroom together and then are mainstreamed for most of the rest of their classes. All the students were brought together for the Project P*art*nership activities. The staff had invited those students for whom they thought the program would be particularly worthwhile, and some of those students chose to participate.

At both Warren Easton and Istrouma the lead teachers selected students who they felt would benefit from participation in the program. These students were assigned to the course during their regular daily schedule. At Istrouma, a few additional students were asked to leave the program for discipline reasons during the course of the year.

At Brentwood, all the students at this small school participated, in addition to six special education students from a nearby public high school, selected on the basis of interest and artistic ability.

At several of the sites, staff members commented that they would like to see non-special-education students included in future Project P*art*nership programs. They felt that the

regular students could benefit from the Project *Parm*ership curriculum as much as the special education students had, and they should not be denied the opportunity to participate. They also felt that since no academic or intellectual skills were required for so many of these activities, they would be entirely appropriate for inclusion of all students. There was an understanding, however, that this combination would have to be made with care in order to avoid the pitfalls of other art classes in which special education students are reluctant to participate fully. The emphasis of the program designed specifically for students with disabilities would have to be maintained.

Project *Parm*ership Key Personnel

At each site, with the exception of Wayne County schools, one staff member was designated as the Lead Teacher who was primarily responsible for coordination of Project *Parm*ership activities. At Istrouma, Hamilton and Warren Easton, all large public schools, this was a special education teacher. At Brentwood, which is an entirely special school, the person in this role was an art therapist. At Wayne County Schools, where students from a number of different school programs participated in Project *Parm*ership, the program was coordinated by two administrators for Wayne County Schools, the fine arts coordinator and the special education coordinator. A number of special education staff members at the associated schools coordinated the program within the schools.

The additional personnel involved in Project *Parm*ership varied across the sites. At Wayne County Schools, two of the art teachers at one of the affiliated high schools taught a number of the classes, while most of the others were led by staff at the Wayne Arts Center. At Hamilton, some of the activities were conducted by art teachers from the local elementary school, and visiting artists were brought in for the others. At Istrouma, Warren Easton and Brentwood, the school's art teacher taught many of the classes, and visiting artists were brought in for others.

Cooperation among key personnel was apparently crucial to the success of many of these programs. At Warren Easton, the principal expressed her appreciation for the teachers who administered the program day-to-day, and her ability to trust that the program would roll along smoothly. The teachers expressed their appreciation for the support of the administration both at the school and at the parish level. Although the teachers and administrators said they did not have any formal in-service training or workshops during the year, they spoke to each other frequently and had a good sense of what was going on in the program. At Wayne County Schools, the art coordinator and the special education coordinator who worked together emphasized that their collaboration was unique and beneficial to the program.

Many teachers were pleased about the cooperation between the arts teachers and the special education teachers at each of the sites. Some of the special education teachers had not previously had the opportunity to try many of the art activities that were introduced by

Project *Part*nership. And, many of the art teachers and artists had not worked with special education students before (although a fair number of them had, as well). So, the union of art and special education benefitted all of these individuals.

Furthermore, the commitment and dedication of staff members to this project was evident at all sites, and visibly benefitted the program. A strong belief in the purposes and goals of Project *Part*nership was expressed unanimously. The high quality of the visiting artists who participated was also impressive.

Duration of Project *Part*nership Program

With the exception of Istrouma and Wayne County Schools, all the Project *Part*nership sites began their programs mid-year and ran until close to the end of the school year. In Wayne County, the program began in November and ran for 16 weeks until early April. At Istrouma, which was in its third year of operation this year, the program started right at the beginning of the school year. The explanations of when the program began were varied. At Warren Easton, the intent was to begin the program at the beginning of the spring semester, but the strong influence of the carnival season in New Orleans in February which included many activities in which staff and students at the school were involved necessitated their postponing of the Project *Part*nership program until March. At Hamilton, lack of funding was cited for the delay in the start of the project.

Other than at Istrouma, staff members and students at all sites expressed the desire to have to program continue longer. There were more than enough activities to fill the time allotted to the program.

Frequency of Project *Part*nership Activities

The frequency with which the Project *Part*nership activities took place was determined by the individual schools. No two schools scheduled the activities in the same way.

In Wayne County, students were taken out of their regular classes to participate in two 45-minute periods of art activities every Friday morning. At Brentwood, the art activities also took place every week. In Hamilton, activities were scheduled sporadically throughout the semester, in units of two or three days every couple weeks, and students were taken out of their regular classes at these times. At Warren Easton, all students in the program were scheduled for one of four vocational classes during third period. Approximately three times per week these classes were all brought together for Project *Part*nership activities.

The program in Baton Rouge is the only one which incorporated the arts into a regular course that takes place every day, just like the other classes. By incorporating the program into regular class like any other period of the day, they lacked some of the novelty

and excitement that was apparent at some of the other sites, where so many of the students pointed out that it was fun to meet some new people and get out of their regular classes. However, even though participation in the Project Partnership program at Istrouma was less of a "big deal," students in no way took it for granted. The students said they looked forward to sixth period, and expressed excitement similar to that of students who had the program once a week.

Timing of Project Partnership Activities

At all of the sites, the Project Partnership activities were scheduled during the regular school day. At Istrouma in their first year, and Warren Easton in their first year (the year after Istrouma's first year), they tried having it after school and on Saturdays. Staff members commented that there were some benefits to having the program after regular school hours. Parents were encouraged to participate, and the activities provided parents with an opportunity to do some things with their children that they previously may never have tried. The staff also felt that the students liked having after-school activities, since they were generally excluded from other school clubs and activities that take place after school.

When the program was scheduled during the regular day, more students could be involved since they had no transportation problems, excuses or other places to be, though most parents could not be participate. The students seemed to prefer this schedule better. Also, it does not require staff members to work additional hours during the week.

Diversity of Project Partnership Activities

The range of activities that were included in the Project Partnership curriculum was impressive. Several field trips were included at each site, as well as hands-on exposure to a diversity of visual and performing arts. Each student seemed to have found one or two activities that stood out as the most enjoyable, and these varied widely across students and sites. During the site visits, the third-party evaluator had an opportunity to observe three specific activities. In all of these, the students were fully engrossed in the activities and visibly pleased to participate. The instructors demonstrated excellent ability to maintain the students interest and involvement.

At Brentwood, students participated in a poetry lesson. The visiting poet was able to quickly build a wonderful rapport with the students. She first spent time getting to know the students and allowed them to get to know her. She read some of her own poetry about her daughter and explained that the students were capable of writing their own poetry. After two warm-up exercises, she was able to get the students to write their own poems. Several students read their poems to the class.

At Istrouma, the girls from the Project Partnership group (separated from the boys, who were doing needlepoint that day) were dancing. They practiced an expressive dance to

Whitney Houston's song "I Will Always Love You." Their teacher was patient as they worked on different pieces of the dance. These girls who reported having always been seen by themselves and others as awkward and clumsy, were dancing with grace and poise that made profoundly clear the value of the Project Partnership program.

At Hamilton, a visiting juggler spent an hour with the students, engaging them in a series of balancing, tossing and catching exercises. They had a long time during which they had their choice of items, such as scarves, rings, hats, beanbags and peacock feathers, to play with and manipulate. The students clearly enjoyed themselves and every one of them participated throughout the hour. At the end of the hour, the leader gathered the group together and told them about the plan for the following day: They would be doing all the same activities again, but they would be acting out a story, and they would be videotaping it. The story was about the kingdom of balance, and the moral of the story was that "balance comes from within."

IV. OUTCOME EVALUATION

Quantitative Outcome Evaluation

Two tests were administered to program participants: the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* and the *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking*. These tests were intended to be administered to all 9 of the sites both as pre-tests, before students participated in the program, and as post-tests, after the program was completed.

Because this procedure was not followed at all schools, and because at many schools, different students were enrolled in the program at the beginning and at the end of the program, the number of students who completed both the pre-test and post-test was significantly lower than the complete number of students who participated in the program (see Table 3).

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking

The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, Figural Streamline, Form A was administered in order to quantitatively assess whether participation in the Project Partnership activities had an impact on the students' creativity.

This form of the Torrance tests creativity along five dimensions: Fluency, Originality, Abstractness of Titles, Elaboration, and Resistance to Premature Closure. After regular scoring, each test is reviewed for evidence of special creative strengths, and these ratings are recorded on the Checklist of Creative Strengths. Pooling these strengths and the average standard score from the five dimensions yields the Creativity Index, which, according to the Torrance test manual, has been found to serve well as an overall indicator of creative potential. Scores on this Creativity Index were analyzed for the purpose of this report to

assess change in creativity as a result of participation in Project *Part*nership.

As shown in Table 4, no significant changes in the Creativity Index were evident in students who participated in Project *Part*nership. At each of the schools that administered the test to students both before and after they participated in Project *Part*nership, the mean

Table 3.

School		Students in Program	Pre-Tests taken		Post-tests taken		Pre-tests AND Post-tests taken	
			Torrance	Piers-Harris	Torrance	Piers-Harris	Torrance	Piers-Harris
NM	Albuquerque	11	11	11	11	11	11[2]	11[3]
NH	Brentwood/Merrimack	25	20	21	17	20	16	16
NV	Hug	15	13	13	8	8	6	7
DC	Spingarn	24	21	22	14	14	13	14
	Mamie D. Lee	16	5	14	5	12	2	12
LA	Istrouma	18	11	16	12	12	8	11
	Warren Easton	28	26	28	0	0	0	0
OH	Hamilton	19	all test scores missing					
	Wayne County (Smithville, Chippewa, Career Center	31	29	29	0	0	0	0
Total		187	125	143	56	66	45	60

score for students on the Creativity Index was not significantly different before and after their Project *Part*nership experience. When the scores of all the schools, who, although their programs differed greatly, all administered some version of the Project *Part*nership curriculum, were combined, there was still no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to assess whether participation in Project *Part*nership had any impact on students' self-concept. The Piers-Harris is a brief self-report measure designed for assessment of children and adolescents.

[2] These tests were scored differently from the tests at the other schools, so they will be analyzed separately.

[3] Only percentiles were reported, so these scores were not included in the analysis with the other scores.

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Self-concept is defined as a relatively stable set of self-attitudes reflecting both a description and an evaluation of one's own behavior and attributes. Items on the scale are scored in either a positive or negative direction to reflect this self-evaluation dimension. This scale focuses on children's conscious self-perceptions, rather than attempting to infer how they feel about themselves from their behavior or the attributes of others.

Table 4.

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking - Creativity Index							
School		n[4]	Pre-Test Score		Post-Test Score		t - value
			Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
NM	Albuquerque	11	scores analyzed separately (see below)				
NH	Brentwood/Merrimack	16	107.44	23.63	109.00	21.58	.40, ns[5]
NV	Hug	6	96.83	18.99	96.00	17.56	-.30, ns
DC	Spingarn	13	64.23	18.71	79.62	21.93	2.05, ns
	Mamie D. Lee	2	22.00	14.14	16.5	9.19	-1.57, ns
LA	Istrouma	8	80.38	18.38	74.00	18.22	-1.24, ns
	Warren Easton	0					
OH	Hamilton	0					
	Wayne County	0					
	Total	45	84.93	29.98	88.44	28.94	1.19, ns

On the 80-item Piers-Harris questionnaire, children are given a number of statements that tell how some people feel about themselves, and are asked to indicate whether each statement applies to them using dichotomous "yes" or "no" responses. There are six "cluster scales" that were developed using factor analysis and include most, but not all of the 80 items of the total scale. These are Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity and Happiness. Each student receives a score on these clusters, as well as a total raw score and a total percentile scale. The total raw scores were analyzed to detect whether any changes in self-concept accompanied participation in Project P*art*nership.

As shown in Table 5, no significant changes in self-concept, as measured by the Piers-Harris, were evident in students who participated in Project P*art*nership. At each of

[4] number included in analysis.

[5] not statistically significant

percentiles on the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed using a t-test, and no significant difference was found between the pre-test and the post-test.

Interpretation of Results

The lack of a significant difference between pre-tests and post-tests in students who participated in Project Partnership warrants a number of explanations other than that the program was not effective. Because the circumstances of this research differed greatly from true experimental conditions, it should not be concluded that the lack of a significant effect should be attributed to the intervention. It is important to note here that if a significant effect had been found, caution would have been equally warranted before attributing this change to the program, due to these same factors.

Table 6.

Albuquerque High School n = 11				
		Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	t - value
Torrance Test of Creative Thinking	Fluency	51.73	42.82	-3.09, $p < .02$
	Flexibility	53.00	42.00	-3.18, $p < .02$
	Originality	36.63	36.09	-.24, ns
	Elaboration	27.36	26.73	-1.05, ns
Piers-Harris - Percentiles		55.64	57.00	.28, ns

Many variables in the students' lives which may have a stronger impact on self-concept, such as school achievement, family dynamics and peer relationships were not controlled for. Furthermore, this research design did not include a control group, which would have taken pre-tests and post-tests but would not have participated in the Project Partnership activities. The time of year at which the tests were administered may have affected students' scores; perhaps an increase in self-concept or creativity that occurred as a result of Project Partnership was not reflected in the post-test scores that were administered during the high-stress period of final exams.

Another factor that may have contributed to the lack of significant quantitative results is that many students had already participated in Project Partnership in previous years. At Hamilton High School and Istrouma High School, the program was in its third year, and a number of students there had already participated for one or two years previously. At Warren Easton, in Wayne County and in DC, the program was in its second year, so several students had already participated in it. Changes may have occurred in these students during their earlier participation in the program that would not have been reflected in their tests during the last year.

Appendix A

the schools that administered the test to students both before and after they participated in Project Partnership, the mean raw standard score for students was not significantly different before and after their Project Partnership experience. When the scores of all the schools were combined, there was still no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

Albuquerque High School

The tests from Albuquerque High School were scored independently, and scores were provided in a different format than other schools' scores, so they were analyzed separately (see Table 6). The Creativity Index from the Torrance was not provided, so the scores on the individual creativity components were analyzed.

Table 5.

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale							
School		n[6]	Pre-Test Score		Post-Test Score		t - value
			Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
NM	Albuquerque	11	scores analyzed separately (see below)				
NH	Brentwood/Merrimack	16	45.13	12.31	45.25	17.06	.04, ns
NV	Hug	7	40.86	18.52	43.57	18.98	1.02, ns
DC	Spingarn	14	59.93	9.59	58.36	10.82	-.68, ns
	Mamie D. Lee	12	55.83	10.17	55.75	11.05	-.08, ns
LA	Istrouma	11	47.91	12.75	41.82	14.23	-1.72, ns
	Warren Easton	0					
OH	Hamilton	0					
	Wayne County	0					
Total		60	50.73	13.69	49.58	15.49	-.96, ns

On the Fluency Component, there was a significant change between the pre-test and post-test scores. However, this change was in a negative direction, with the level of Fluency decreasing after the students participated in the program. The same result occurred for the Flexibility component; the level of Flexibility decreased for students who had participated in the program. For the Originality and Elaboration components, there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

On the Piers-Harris, only the percentile scores were reported. The means of these

[6] number included in analysis.

Qualities such as self-concept and creativity are firmly ingrained in one's character and resistant to change. Even exposure to the most intensive intervention may not be capable of changing these qualities if administered for only a few months. The nature of the Project *Part*nership curriculum varied across all the school sites. In some schools, students participated in Project *Part*nership activities only a few times each month, while in others they participated several times each week. The program at most schools ran for only a few months, which may not be enough time to change such intrinsic characteristics.

Finally, the instruments themselves may not have been appropriate for use with this population for the purpose of measuring the effects of a short-term intervention. It is possible that the level of self-reflection and cognitive ability necessary for completion of these instruments was unreasonable for this group of students, many of whom had serious disabilities. Perhaps a behavioral measure or inventory would have provided a more concrete means to assess whether changes had occurred. The qualitative methods which were employed to assess the outcomes of Project *Part*nership, described below, may more accurately reflect the true impact of the program on the students and the school community.

Qualitative Outcome Evaluation

Impact on Students

Students' Reactions to Project *Part*nership

Many of the students were limited in their ability to express their reactions to the program beyond that it was "fun" and that they liked it. Several students described their initial skepticism about a program called "special," but found that they liked it very much. They described the new things that they had learned about art, and some of the new insights they had into themselves. Many students also emphasized the social aspects of their Project *Part*nership experience.

Trying New Things. A number of students described how the program had exposed them to new experiences and taught them new things. One 20-year-old student who is orthopedically handicapped particularly enjoyed the mime, because, he said "I like to talk so it was a challenge to do things in a different way, without talking." He has begun courses in a broadcasting arts program, and hopes to be a disk jockey. One student described how she enjoyed the pottery, because she enjoyed making things without having to "think about what is happening in your head." Another student said first she did not like getting up in front of people, but that got easier too, and she found she liked the drama activities the best. Another felt she had learned a lot through the program, particularly that "you can make things by using your imagination."

The experience of trying something new seemed to be just as important as the actual

activities that were introduced. One student felt that the most important thing she had learned so far was not to say she can't do something until she tries, and another expressed, "it doesn't matter if you fail, as long as you try."

Changes in Self-Determination. Although none of the students described their improved self-determination as a result of the program, many acknowledged changes in their own moods, feelings and behavior. Some students reported feeling "psyched up" after the activities. One student said that art "made her feel happy." Another liked the dancing the best, because it allowed her to "get deep within herself." She felt that the program had improved her self-esteem, behavior, and communication and she said she has gotten better at looking at people when she talks, although she admits she is still working on it. Another student described how the drama activities had taught her to express her feelings in a different way, and to not laugh during sad situations. She also enjoyed the dancing; she said she never thought she could dance before, but now that she sees she can, she feels great. Another student felt that the program taught her new ways to express herself. Some of the important things students said they learned included "not to be embarrassed," "not to have such a temper," and that "its okay to be crazy sometimes!"

Social Aspects. The social aspects of the program were appreciated by many of the students. In some of the sites, Project Partnership brought together special education students who were mainstreamed for most of their classes. In other sites, students who spent their whole days with the same group of students were combined with other groups for Project Partnership activities.

Several students mentioned that they enjoyed meeting some new friends. The primary reaction of the students at one site was that "we got to meet girls." In addition, social skills such as ability to communicate with others and "to help each other instead of teasing each other all the time," were also mentioned as benefits of the program.

Program Weaknesses. When asked about the program's weaknesses, nearly all students expressed only that there was not enough of it. Several wished only for more time to do their favorite activities. They would have added more sessions during the week, had longer sessions, or extended the length of the program within the school year. The only bad part about the program, one student said, was that it ended.

One student at Brentwood had nothing positive to say about the program, and felt that since he already was a talented artist, the program could not teach him anything (the staff warned me about his generalized negative style prior to this interview). His talent was evident in the drawings that were displayed at the school. He did admit that the program might be helpful to other students, and that he enjoyed the drama class.

Observations of Activities

Appendix A

Since many of the students could not express their feelings about the programs in words, it was helpful to have an opportunity to observe their participation in Project P*art*nership activities. During all three of the activities that were observed, the students were attentive and fully participatory. They seemed uninhibited in their expression and willingness to enjoy themselves. Samples of students artwork were displayed at many of the sites and also demonstrated the range of creative expression that had taken place during the year.

Parent Reactions

The parents were very positive about the program in general. None of the parents noted any dramatic changes in their sons and daughters, but they each noted small instances of change that they felt might be attributed to the program. One parent noted a change in her daughter's assertiveness and sudden willingness to stand up to her more aggressive sister. Another parent noted that her daughter had recently begun dancing to her own music in the living room. Another mother said she did not notice any profound changes in her son, but that he did seem excited when she picked him up at the end of activities. One father said his daughter had seemed more open and straightforward recently, which may have been due to her participation in Project P*art*nership.

Project P*art*nership Staff Reactions

All the staff members expressed a genuine commitment to Project P*art*nership, a belief in its goals and purposes, and a belief that these goals had been achieved.

Exposure to New Experiences. Staff members emphasized that this program promotes **inclusion**, by giving these students access to parts of life that they otherwise would not have had access to. It provided an opportunity for the students to leave the boundaries of the school and go out into the community and interact with other people who did not see them as "special education" kids. The principal of Istrouma felt that the program has exposed the students to things they would otherwise never have seen or done. It allowed the students alternative ways to express themselves using a variety of media.

Changes in Self-Determination. Many staff members described how the program had influenced changed in students' feelings about themselves. Even if there were not observable changes in self-determination among many of the students, they emphasized the subtle difference that Project P*art*nership had made in their lives. One teacher emphasized that the program has taught students to think creatively in their work. The concept of making choices about how to do something is new to them, since they have generally always been told what to do. This capacity for choosing one's own path is at the root of self-determination.

The teachers felt that this program provided students with a chance to feel "special in a positive way," since they are so used to feeling special in a negative way. One teacher

described how the students visibly "blossomed," and that their enthusiasm carried over into other classes. According to the Lead Teacher at Istrouma, the most important thing that happened was the kids felt what it is like to succeed at something, to accomplish and be creative, not to have everything they do be wrong. They began to jump in and try things that they previously would not do.

Another special education teacher at Istrouma who worked with the Project Partnership participants in other classes and participated in many of the activities, had students write about their experiences in writing exercises later on, and she was pleased with how they expressed themselves. She said that in many cases the students ceased to be troublemakers.

Social Aspects. The social aspect of the program was also stressed by staff members. At Hamilton, where there was probably the widest range of disability levels among the students in the Project Partnership group, staff felt that the students benefitted from this experience. At first there was some resistance to this, the teachers reported, but through the course of the program a group cohesiveness had developed and students with different levels of ability had become friends. The program also allowed the Brentwood students to have contact with the public school students who participated in Project Partnership, which was a positive experience for all of them.

The improvement in the students' self-confidence was visible; at first the students were shy and hesitant about performing, now they "can't get them off the stage." Students learned the process of using their own skills to achieve a goal; to start with an idea and make something tangible out of it.

Impact on Schools and Communities

Project Partnership Staff Reactions

At many sites there was a firm belief that Project Partnership increased the community's awareness of the potential for involvement in the arts among people with disabilities. The schools also benefitted because of the new repertoire of material that Project Partnership provided the teachers. Several administrators also felt that the program had a positive effect on the special education department at the school in general, and the principal at Istrouma mentioned that he has been in contact with another local high school to discuss implementing a similar program there.

There was also a noted change in attitude about the inclusion of special education kids in arts classes. The teachers had been reportedly accepting of them before, but had never had that much exposure to them. Previously, special education students rarely chose to take art classes at all, and when they did, they sat in the back and did not actively participate. Now, at Warren Easton, special education students who have participated in Project

Partnership have asked to be in the band and to take other art courses. One student was identified as talented in the arts. At Brentwood, the students participated in the Steering Committee, and staff members felt this gave then an opportunity to see the students in a new way.

V. SUMMARY AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Because this report covers the third and final year of Project Partnership, recommendations for the continued operation of Project Partnership are not called for. However, the wide range of experiences with Project Partnership described in this report should provide useful information to schools who may elect to adopt the Project Partnership curriculum into their own schools.

Overall, Project Partnership was a very impressive program. The teachers and administrators involved in the program are highly committed to special education, the visiting artists were able to expand their own horizons by working with special students and the students had the time of their lives. There was a profound sense of loss among the students due to the fact that the program was ending, particularly in the Wayne County Schools where the program had just recently ended at the time of the site visit. Teachers and administrators at all sites expressed a commitment to continue with the program next year, in some capacity, though there was a range of levels of initiative being taken to see that that would happen. The primary concern expressed was how it would be paid for.

Project Partnership has demonstrated that special education students can benefit from exposure to arts activities, in any capacity. Even if one art teacher at a school simply reserves one period of his or her day for special education students, with no additional personnel or funding provided, students could benefit. The regularity with which Istrouma incorporated Project Partnership into their regular curriculum demonstrated that students were benefitting from the actual participation in the activities, rather than simply the departure from their regular schedule.

Because of some miscommunication between the individual sites and National VSA, there was some confusion expressed by staff members about what was expected of them at times. Staff members who showed the least concern for what was expected by National VSA seemed to feel the most empowered to improvise and to adapt the broad goals of Project Partnership to the specific needs of their students. Staff who were more concerned with the requirements of National VSA expressed the most discomfort with specifics of the curriculum. This discrepancy demonstrated that the curriculum should be used as a guide, but not as a "cookbook" that must be followed to the letter. When this curriculum is marketed to schools for their independent use, this relationship to National VSA should not be an issue.

<u>The Value of Evaluation</u>

The evaluation component of a program such as Project P*art*nership is critical because it provides feedback both about whether the program is operating as planned and whether the outcomes are as expected. Evaluation must take place throughout the operation of the project, from beginning to end. In order for the evaluation to be effective, it is important that key program personnel understand its purpose and value. It is also important that the evaluation be designed appropriately, with the specific circumstances under which the program is operating taken into consideration.

For a variety of reasons, including changes in the third-party evaluator position and other administrative positions at the national and state levels, this current evaluation did not meet its potential for effectiveness. The initial evaluation design was ambitious, and employed a wide range of measures for both process and outcome evaluation. The Torrance Test of Creativity and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale were chosen to measure the changes in self-determination. The preliminary site assessments, activity evaluation logs and lesson plan forms were employed to provide information on how the program was proceeding and whether changes needed to be made along the way.

It is not clear to this author how these instruments were used during the first two years. With the exception of Brentwood, which was in its first year and was conscientious about completing every one of the forms, key personnel at all the visited sites were not clear about the purpose of many of these forms. When asked about them, several staff members indicated that the forms had not been completed during the course of the program, but guaranteed that they would be, retroactively, by the end of the year. Instead of appreciating that these instruments would provide actual feedback about each of the activities in order to benefit the program, they viewed them as simply another piece of paperwork that had to be completed before the deadline.

Furthermore, staff members maintained that the forms the students were expected to complete were highly inappropriate for students with disabilities such as these. As a result, the teachers had to do much of the writing for the students, and the investment of time (that could have been used for more art time) was not at all worthwhile for the minimal information that they provided. Since the verbal skills of many of the students were so limited, their reactions to many of the activities were often the same ("It was fun;" "I liked it") and did not provide specific feedback about the success of any individual activity. Many staff members found it frustrating, but felt that since national VSA had specified that the program's design required that these forms be completed, they simply had to complete them.

Thus, the most important recommendation that can be offered here to any schools who choose to adopt Project P*art*nership for their own curriculums is that they be empowered to conduct their own evaluations. If personnel at each site understand the value and purpose of evaluation, they can design an evaluation that is appropriate for their own site. These evaluations can be simple, and should aim simply to assess the program's progress and to identify whether the program's goals are being reached. Though such

evaluations should be conducted primarily for each school's own purposes, copies of evaluation reports should be provided to National VSA for their files. A collection of these individual evaluation reports should be maintained by National VSA and made available to other programs who chose to adopt the Project *Part*nership curriculum. If evaluation is used in this fashion, all who use Project *Part*nership in the future will benefit from it.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Questions for 1 or 2 Main People at each Site:

1. Get demographic information about all the kids. In particular: Age, grade, disability, previous arts experience (with VSA, or not)

2. How are staff hired, selected? Were special people hired just for this program, or were teachers who were already employed incorporated into this program?

3. What is the staff training process?

   Preservice? Inservice?

4. What is the criteria for selection of kids to participate in PP?

5. Briefly describe the program. What is the experience of each participant?

6. What is the approximate cost per student?

   Where does funding come from?

7. Has there been a reduction in barriers for people with disabilities in the community as a result of this program?

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PROJECT *PART*NERSHIP STUDENT INTERVIEW

Name_____ School_____ Date____

1. How old are you?

2. What was it that first interested you in the arts program?

3. Did you have any art courses in school, or other significant art experiences, before entering the program?

   If so, on what art form did the course/experience focus?

4. Which art form did you like best during the program and which one did you like least?

   - Dance
   - Visual Arts
   - Music
   - Drama
   - Creative Writing

5. How did you feel about yourself while you were making/doing your favorite art activity?

   How did you feel afterwards?

6. What was the most important thing you learned from the program?

   Why was it most important?

Appendix A

7. Did this program teach you the value of the following skills/values? If so, how?

- Planning is important
- Talking about your work is important
- Looking and evaluating what you see is important
- Listening to the opinions of others is important
- Choosing your materials carefully is important
- Trying new things/evaluating their success is important

8. What did you think of the Partnership Group?

Did it help you to do any of the following? If so, how?

- Improve your artistic work
- Improve your self-expression
- Improve your ability to communicate with others
- Improve your opinion of yourself

9. In this program, you have participated in several different art forms. Do you think you might like to become an artist or a performer?

If so, has the program shown you how to go about doing it?

10. In what ways could the program be improved?

What would you tell another student so that he or she might enjoy the program more and get more out of it?

PROJECT *PART*NERSHIP TEACHER/ARTIST INTERVIEW

Name_____ School_____ Date_____

1. How valuable were the workshops you participated in as preparation to teach in this program?

   In what ways could they be improved?

2. In what ways did the documentation procedures such as Lesson Plans, Teacher Logs, and Student Portfolios affect your teaching in the program?

3. The instructional process involved a pre-activity, an art activity, and a post-activity.

   How successful was this structure in practice?

   Was one component more successful than the others? How so?

4. Did the research component of the program (data collection, etc.) affect your teaching in the program? How so?

   In what ways could the research component be made more effective and less intrusive at the program level?

5. What was the most important thing students **actually** learned from the program (as opposed to what they were expected to learn)?

   Why was it most important?

Appendix A

6. Do you support the goals and objectives of this program?

Do you think that they were achieved?

In your opinion, what was the most important objective of the program?

Was it achieved?

7. In your experience, is there a significant difference in the kind and amount of exposure to the arts between students in self-contained SE classrooms, and mainstreamed classrooms?

8. During this project, have you observed any evidence of the elimination of societal barriers to full arts participation by students with disabilities?

Is there evidence that the program has helped to establish a network of support in which students can pursue their interests in the arts and other academic areas?

9. What strengths and weaknesses have you seen in this program?

What recommendations would you make to improve it?

10. Do you think the program is suitable for replication on a national basis?

If yes, explain why.

If not, why not?

PROJECT *PART*NERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW

Name_____ School_____ Date_____

1. In your opinion, what effect has the Self-Determination project had on its participants? Please explain.

2. In your opinion, what effect has the Self-Determination project had on its teachers/faculty? Please explain.

3. What effect has the project had on this institution? Please explain.

4. What role did the Project PARTnership steering committee play in this project?

5. How important was the Teacher Workshop component for the implementation of this program?

   What suggestions can you offer to improve this component?

PROJECT *PARTNERSHIP* PARENT INTERVIEW

Name_____ School_____ Date_____

1. How did you first learn of this project?

2. What was your involvement in the project?

3. During the project, did you notice a change in your child's attitudes or behaviors? Please explain.

4. Did your child talk to you about his/her experiences during the program?

   Would you please give an example?

5. Did your child develop a greater sense of self-esteem during the program? (If yes, continue.) How so?

   To what extent do you think the **artistic training** itself was responsible?

   (Were factors other than the artistic training more important in your child's improved self-esteem?)

Appendix A

6. In the Self-Determination program, did your child develop skills in any of the following areas (please give examples)?
   - Making informed choices
   - Working independently
   - Starting and finishing a project
   - Evaluating his/her own work
   - Listening to others
   - Giving and taking praise
   - Respecting the opinions of others
   - Talking about art and personal feelings

7. What do you perceive as being the main goals and objectives of this program?

   Do you support them?

   Do you think that they were achieved?

   In your opinion, what was the most important goal/objective of the program?

   Was it achieved?

8. What did you and your child enjoy most about this project?

   Did you have an opinion about the role of arts in Special Education before he/she entered the program?

   If so, how has your opinion changed?

9. Do you feel that the program has helped to establish a network of support in which students with diabilities can pursue their interests in the arts and other academic areas?

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program? What recommendations would you make to improve it?

APPENDIX B

Project *PART*nership
Sites Final Reports

Very Special Arts Louisiana

Baton Rouge, LA
Istrouma High School

Project PARTnership
Site Final Report

VERY SPECIAL ARTS LOUISIANA

Department of Education
2758-C Brightside Lane
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821
(504) 765-2600

Enriching the lives of people with disabilities

LOUISIANA PROJECT PARTNERSHIP
East Baton Rouge Parish
Istrouma High School

Year 3 Final Report - June 17, 1993

A. OVERVIEW

Project Partnership Year 3, as continued at Istrouma High School in the Final Phase, was a tremendous success primarily because the East Baton Rouge Parish Superintendent of Education and the Administrators in Special Education are all committed to providing arts experiences to students with disabilities. The arts are a major component of the special education program in East Baton Rouge Parish. In order to provide students with an appropriate education, when the arts is recommended as a part of the IEP, the local school district is responsive to the recommendations of the evaluation team. This year eighteen students were enrolled in the Very Special Arts' course/Project Partnership. Participating students earned one-half Carnegie unit in art. The writing of IAEP's was coordinated by the IEP facilitator for the parish, with appropriate input from the artists, special education and regular teachers.

The East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, Director of Special Education Services, and the Principal at Istrouma High School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, (the site of Project Partnership Years 1 and 2), are committed to providing viable arts experiences to high school students with disabilities. The administration provided leadership in the organization and successful implementation of the project. The Principal and staff were, again, supportive and provided material and technical resources, along with personal participation in several activities conducted during the school year. The heart of the project, was the steering Committee, which not only set the pace and laid the framework for the final phase, but also doubled its effort to maximize the program's impact on behalf of the students.

The location of the Very Special Arts office in the same city as Project Partnership added dimension to the program because participants had convenient access to the Very Special Arts staff and board. The program site also utilized the talents of the staff artist. Consequently, this convenience in networking with the VSA office for additional assistance in implementing the program was a favorable asset that contributed to its success.

One interesting development stemming from the project was an increase of school-wide awareness and interest in the arts that led to the formation of a new choir and dramatic arts consortium. The drama group wrote and performed original plays.

Another development, worth noting, is that a former music artist-in residence, Mr. Everrett Parker, was so convinced by the newly discovered arts tool Project Partnership exposed, that he incorporated the ideals of the Project into his goals for several elementary schools in the parish. The results have netted strong support from the instructional leaders of his schools. Mr. Parker's ongoing interest in using music to inspire self-determination has caught the attention of not just our parish but the Louisiana State Very Special Arts Office. In addition to being a music specialist with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, Mr. Parker also serves on the music faculty of The Louisiana State University, where he is the Director of Gospel Choirs. There he has discovered that the need to build self-determination exists even on this level and has not hesitated to incorporate the Project Partnership concepts into his teaching strategies. It is anticipated Mr. Parker will be asked to author a music guide on innovative methods of effectively and successfully instilling music, in addition to, other arts into the lives of children and youths with disabilities.

Finally, the Administration still believes that pertinent contributors to the success of Project Partnership, Year 3 were intensive parental involvement, sincere dedication of artists and teachers and wholesome bounding among students and other components of the program.

Program Strengths were as follows:

* *Year 3 brought about solidarity of parental interest and participation.*

* *Students displayed more of the fruits of self-determination and choice-making as evidenced in their becoming more aggressive in their competing, reasoning, socializing, creating and working.*

* *More students aspired for leadership roles in the school and community.*

* *More students became confident in themselves, let down their walls of exclusion and allowed new dimensions in bonding between peers, other significant persons in the program, including members of their families.*

* *There was increased efficiency of networking between all components (local, parish, state, and national) of the project toward the effective implementation of this progressive program.*

* *The advanced planning of teachers prior to the start of the program was invaluable to the timely execution of the program. Teachers actually began planning in anticipation of year 3's beginning.*

* *Friendships and bonding of students, parents, faculty, artists, steering committee, and community have strengthened and grown into social interaction networking that will last a lifetime.*

* *3 graduates of Istrouma high school, who participated in all three phases of Project Partnership, each have departed for work, vo-tech school and college. They attributed the inspiration and persistence to Project Partnership.*

* *The inclusion of cultural experiences outside and inside the school continued to stimulate the overall arts program. Student interest and enthusiasm flourishes when exposed to community cultural activities. Year 3 capitalized on the findings of Year 2 by increasing the opportunities for students to enjoy cultural activities.*

The weaknesses encountered in the final phase of Project Partnership were no more than those considered "school related" norms. They are not worthy of mention.

B. SITE ASSESSMENT

In Project Partnership Year 1, Istrouma High was initially selected because of the high enrollment of students with disabilities who were not participants in the regular art education program. Year 2 was continued at Istrouma for the same reason and also because there were no arts instructors working specifically with disabled students. Both Project Partnership Year 1 and Year 2 had provided an excellent core course in the arts for this group of young adults and the ramifications of the Projects' success were evidenced school-wide. Their "newly found" self-determination began to propel them, at individual paces, into the academic, social and artistic mainstreams of the school and the community-at-large. The previous years' projects had begun to narrow the void between the disabled students and their surrounding world and had motivated them to aggressively pursue new avenues toward fulfilling, meaningful adulthood. In essence, Project Partnership Year 1 at Istrouma laid the solid foundations, Year 2 set the supporting columns in place and Year 3 was to erect the walls and roofs that were to form the fortress of self-determination needed to survive in this high paced and ever changing society.

In order to accommodate the greatest number of students with disabilities at the school and provide daily, consistent exposure to artists, Project Partnership was incorporated into the regular curriculum. As the result, there were no significant barriers to the students participating in the project. They signed up for the course as any other course offered at the school.

We recommend that Contact time, School staff and Artists be effectively coordinated with the optimum availability of the students to be served. We have, also come to believe that the span of time in which the students are already in place at school is ideal for scheduling Project classes. It just seems to work best for THEM. No special arrangements had to be made for transportation and there were no additional conflicts created with after school activities of students, their parents and/or their families. Our General Community , Local Universities and The Greater Baton Rouge

Arts Council provided an unlimited roster of artists to select from. The excitement of "outside personalities" added new life to the pre-set routine of the normal school day for the disabled students participating.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee consisted of the Very Special Arts State Director, Istrouma High School Principal, East Baton Rouge Parish Director of Special Education, Project Director, two Special Education Teachers, one Regular Education Teacher, IEP Facilitator, Parents and Community Activists.

The makeup of the Steering Committee was ideal for it was large enough to power the project; yet, small enough to maintain its integrity for formulating directives. One member of this committee was disabled. The broad diversity within the committee complimented the mission of the Final Phase by providing depth in planning and implementing the various components of the Project.

The structure was effective as outlined. We recommend that future sites consider adding a disabled student and a media specialist to the committee. The student would help to shape future courses by offering input reflective of the ones the committee seeks to serve and the media specialist would help facilitate accurate and effective publicity.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

Because the state mandated IEP form allows for the inclusion of additional services and programs to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities, the development of the IAEP was simplified and there was no increase in time-consuming paperwork. Formation of the IAEP was jointly provided by the lead teacher, the child's special education teacher, the regular education teacher, and the artists. The Instructional Specialists monitored the program and made recommendations to assure that appropriate arts activities were planned and implemented to meet the individual needs of each student.

The IAEP plans were very effective as evidenced in our ability to develop sound lessons directly from them. Also, the added observations and input of the Instructional Specialists were invaluable tools to aid in the modification of lessons to further meet program goals and student needs.

We believe that the IAEP integrated with the State Approved IEP allows for the formulation of strong goals, objectives and lesson plans designed to effectively meet the comprehensive needs of special education students with disabilities.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING

The scheduling of the core course as an elective in the school curriculum continued to be an expedient method of providing arts experiences to students with disabilities. This course was an art elective for students with disabilities matriculating through the special education program. Students completing this course earned regular Carnegie units. We recommend, if possible, all new sites incorporate the course in the regular school curriculum. However, if this is not possible, we recommend the course be offered on a daily basis. Meaningful incentives, such as opportunities to display their talents before parents, teachers, and peers; to attend and participate in community cultural activities, and to be taught by noted artists in the community and nation, continued to stimulate participation of the students.

There were no problems involved in scheduling the core course. Future sites should arrange core courses within the regular school day at a feasible time when the maximum number of students can participate. Mid-day scheduling generated excitement among our students throughout the entire day. Pre-class excitement was based on their anticipation of new experiences in the arts and post-class excitement was maintained by reflection on those new experiences. We have discovered this enthusiasm translated into increased efforts, on the part of students, to work harder in their general class performance. School day scheduling also afforded interaction between Project Partnership Core Classes and select Regular Classes. This aided in the integration of the Core Class into the school's curriculum.

Noteworthy too, is the fact that we experienced no problems securing artists to administer the core course for the Final Phase. Actually, when the previous year's artists were contacted, they accepted without reservation. The artists felt their previous experiences in working with disabled students would offer them a greater challenge, one they welcomed. The Project Partnership teachers experienced a unique growth that was the result of being paired, not only with each other, but also with the artists-in-residence. This expanded team gave added depth to the program and afforded the students an exemplary experience that was the direct result of blending the unique skills of each teacher specialist. The teachers, in essence, learned from each other, expanded their teaching techniques and developed a versatility that otherwise would not have occurred.

The scheduling of the course was so effective that the local administration will continue the project as part of the regular curriculum. The East Baton Rouge Special Education Department and the Very Special Arts Office of the Louisiana Department of Education will jointly fund the project.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement was expanded to include a parent on the steering committee in the third year phase of Project Partnership. This inclusion resulted in increased parental involvement relative to student activities. A parent, who owns a modeling school, volunteered her service and expertise to expose the students to a self-image course. This type of activity assisted the students in building self-determination through improved self-image.

The primary barrier to parental involvement in the Final Phase of Project Partnership was the conflict of work schedules. Many parents were involved with several jobs and/or caring for children other than their own who participated in the project. In order to assist them as much as possible, additional activities were planned at varied times to accommodate the parents. Also, in order to keep all parents advised, a line of communication was maintained via letters, memos, phone calls and personal visits.

We recommend the acquisition of a parent, who is an artist to serve as an artist-in-residence of the program. Criteria would not necessitate this to be a parent of a participating student, but preferably a parent of the school where the program is administered. The parent/artist could serve as a catalyst to inspire additional parental interest and involvement in Project Partnership activities. If the parent/artist is not utilized in the capacity of artists-in-residence he could also be utilized to teach parents of students.

STUDENTS

Students who had participated in Project Partnership, Year 2 were given first priority in the selection process for Project Partnership Year 3. Additional consideration was given to recommendations offered by teachers and to students who expressed an interest to participate.

There were no barriers related to student participation in Project Partnership Year 3.

GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATIONS

Kerry Curtin is Program Manager with the Very Special Arts of Louisiana. He has worked in the State Department of Education in the area of Vocational Education, and taught commercial art to high school students. His interest in students with disabilities have motivated him to certify in Special Education in addition to Art Education. Mr. Curtin is presently pursuing his doctorate in Special Education.

Theresa Desselles is a gifted art teacher at Istrouma High School who has been a part of Project Partnership for all three years. Mrs. Desselles has helped to formulate the initial lessons in art and implement them throughout each phase.

Albert Odell is a retired drama teacher and creative writer known for his vast knowledge gained from years of teaching students how to recreate life's realism, focus on personal uniqueness and develop inner qualities to enhance character. Mr. Odell exposed the students to methods of channeling personal energies to produce the most of their talents and skills.

Sonya Robinson is a versatile and multi-cultural artist who capitalized on the uniqueness of gospel music by challenging the students to "soul search" toward meeting lesson objectives.

Bridgette Williams, a dance teacher specializing in modern, jazz and African dance techniques, fascinated and excited the students with the discovery of body movements. In many instances the students were previously unaware of many of the meanings and motions they were capable of producing through dance. They discovered that dancing was truly an expressive manner to vent their feelings with confidence.

Ed Buggs, anchorman of WBRZ Television Station, is a noted newscaster and avid supporter of students with disabilities. One of his prime objectives is to promote public awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities and to educate the community in the varied ways they provide assistance.

Doug Williams, former NFL quarterback for the Washington Red Skins, and a representative for Partnership for a Drug Free Louisiana, challenged our students to exert self-discipline with a purpose. That purpose is for self-preservation. Mr. Williams encouraged the students to be strong and think of self-care as their most valuable asset.

IMPROVEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED FOR THE FUTURE

Achieving Success through the arts has proven to be a builder of Self-Determination, Choice-making, self-esteem, and self-discipline. We have, also, discovered that there is a direct correlation between the number of opportunities for students to publicly display Arts Achievements, and the Growth Rate of Self-Determination. In other words, the more students' talents in the arts are viewed and are praised by their community, the faster Self-Determination germinates within them. We suggest that opportunities for public display of the arts and public accolade are maximized in future projects.

CONCLUSION

Project Partnership, the Final Phase, proved to be a a dynamic, versatile tool that, when placed in the hands of a master craftsman, could be utilized to break, melt, mold and fill. That is, this Project uses the arts as a means of:

1. *Penetrating and breaking vases of barriers that stifle the successful maturation and adaptation of disabled students,*
2. *Melting the insignificant, trivial and sometimes societal fractured, imperfect pieces,*
3. *Molding (remolding) them into beautiful, yet functional, proud masterpieces and*
4. *Filling (refilling) them with the essence of what joyous, good and successful living is all about.*

Each of us has sincerely taken Project Partnership, in all of its phases, to heart. We are appreciative for your consideration of us. Our community, in total, has been indelibly enhanced by the inception and implementation of this visionary program within its walls.

Very Special Arts Louisiana

New Orleans, LA
Warren Easton High School

Project *PART*nership
Site Final Report

VERY SPECIAL ARTS PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

1992/93 FINAL REPORT

SITE ASSESSMENT:

What were the most significant barriers to student participation in the arts you discovered?

It was mandated that the Very Special Arts program become a course within the regular school day, and that specific students be assigned to a certain class period. The chosen students felt that they were missing out on a lot of activities in the regularly offered electives. The students who were not chosen to participate in the program felt slighted, because they did not receive the special attention and extra services during the school day. It was, therefore, felt that the after school format was more conducive to accommodate the truly interested student, while not interfering with regular school activities, or alienating these students not participating in the program. Time restraints were also a problem, since the regular class period was only fifty minutes. Special education students have difficulty with expressive language, especially writing skills. The students were not able to independently fill out the necessary "Student Activity Plan" required by Project Partnership. The need to provide nearly one-on-one assistance for the students to complete the forms reduced the actual time spent on the activities, and therefore the completion of most activities.

Did Project Partnership help to reduce or eliminate any of these barriers?

No. Limited class time and a very late starting date hindered our performance.

What recommendations would you make about these areas in the future?

If possible, the Very Special Arts program should be conducted after school. This would allow more time for each activity, and allow the students to participate in the regular school electives with their non-exceptional peers. The students should only be required to complete only one evaluation form per subject area (ex. music). This would be helpful since the students have limited writing skills and are unable to complete the form independently.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN:

Who was involved in the creation of the Individual Arts Education Plans?

Initially, the committee met to plan strategies to teach the activities during the school day. We assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the activities and the procedures utilized throughout the program. The committee also made daily assessments of each session's success. We encouraged the assigned students to come to each session to reinforce their participation. Pictures were taken during some activities and the students were allowed to review them as a form of positive reinforcement.

How effective was the Plan in guiding the education of students?

The initial planning session allowed us to develop a procedure for presenting the activities during the limited time of one class period. Intermittent meetings throughout the program allowed us to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the program and change them if necessary. For example, it was felt that the frame group was to large to be effective, so it was broken down into two groups. The daily review of each session allowed us to react quickly to a particular student's needs or any small problems.

What would you recommend to improve the Plan?

The Very Special Arts program should be conducted after school. This would allow more time for each activity and allow the students to participate in the regular school electives with their non-exceptional peers. It would also reduce resentment among students not participating in the program. The students should be required to fill out only one evaluation form per subject area (ex. music). This would be helpful since the students have limited writing skills and are unable to fill out the form independently.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING:

What problems were involved in scheduling the core course?

Because we were locked into one class period during the school day, we were unable to get guest lecturers. Instead, we were forced to use to our best advantage all the in-house talent and personnel available at that time. We also had to schedule the sessions based on the teacher's availability during the program, rather than strategically placing them to maintain the interest and motivation of the students. We were, however, able to schedule all of the selected students at one class period with the cooperation of Mrs. Jean A. Demas, the principal of Warren Easton Fundamental High School, and the efforts of Mrs. Alexina Medley, the Special Education Chairperson and Site Coordinator for Project Partnership.

What arrangements were made to solve these problems?

A flexible schedule was used at the school site and the Very Special Arts program became an elective. We used qualified and professional in-house talent to teach the activities. These creative modifications were made to ensure proper presentation and effectiveness of all the activities. We were able to use the school funds to timely receive materials and pay for activities, with the understanding that these funds would be reimbursed to our school at the appropriate time from the appropriate sources. Reimbursement of the funds is a cumbersome and timely procedure. At all times the participating teachers remained flexible to changes. Ms. Sherrel White, a special education teacher, was especially helpful with these scheduling changes. Mrs. Alexina Medley spent a large portion of her free time scheduling the changes between all parties involved in the program. She sent memos informing teachers and parents of all changes.

What would you recommend to future sites regarding scheduling?

If possible, the Very Special Arts Program should be reinstated as an after school activity. This would give both the students and teachers the necessary time to make the activities effective and their goals attainable. Also, if it were after school, we would have experienced greater parental participation as we did last year. This is important because, with any learning activity with school aged children, the level of parental participation has a direct proportional effect on student motivation and achievement.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

How were the parents involved in the project?

Parents were invited to attend the activities, but could not attend because the program was held during the day. Parents were also invited to be on the Steering Committee. The parents made special arrangements to transport their children.

What barriers to parent involvement did you discover?

The only barrier to parent involvement was the inconvenient time of the regular sessions. The parents work during the school day.

How did you mitigate these barriers?

Since the program only occurred during the school day, the barriers were difficult to eliminate. However, the parents were notified well in advance of upcoming field trips and activities so that they could perhaps change their schedules to attend the program. A few parents were able to do this.

What would you recommend to facilitate parent involvement?

If possible, the Very Special Arts program should be held after school. This would allow the parents to participate in the activities. Also, if more funds were available we could provide the parents with complimentary tickets to the community activities.

STUDENTS:

How were students selected to participate?

The teachers were encouraged to submit the names of students who would benefit from and who were interested in the program. The Steering Committee chose from the submitted names the group that would be most productive in providing all their fellow students with difficult experiences and ideas. The students were chosen along a cross-section of racial and gender lines to support this concept. A percentage of each exceptionality (primary and secondary) was admitted to the program.

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STUDENTS:

What barriers did you encounter related to student participation?

We had difficulty scheduling students who take regular education classes at the assigned period. The students were also unable to take the regularly offered school electives with their non-exceptional peers.

How did you mitigate these barriers?

The students were offered the opportunity to take the electives the next school year.

GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATIONS:

Warren Bell, an anchorman from News Eight/Channel 8, was invited as a guest presenter to motivate the students. The students enjoyed the presentation. They were also featured on the evening news.

CONCLUSION:

The students learned how to plan and carry-out their ideas for the activities. The students learned the group cooperative behavior that was essential to complete assigned tasks. The students were also more willing to express their talents and try new things. (ex. theatre)

The implementation of the program during the day was a factor that contributed to several weaknesses in the overall program. There was a limited amount of time for completing the day's activity. Special Education students need more time to plan and carry out activities. The students were prevented from using this class period to participate in regularly scheduled electives with their non-exceptional peers. Since, the program was during the day, the students who could not participate felt slighted or resentful, because they did not receive the special attention and special services. We were also unable to schedule guest speakers during the school day. It would have also been more efficient if the money for the program had been placed in the school's budget. This would have allowed for easy access to the funds. Instead, we were forced to use the school's funds through the cooperation of Mrs. Jean Demas, the principal, who graciously agreed to be reimbursed for those funds. We would have been unable to timely receive necessary material and plan and attend activities without this cooperation.

CONCLUSION: conti.

Also, the Student Activity Plan form is very difficult for the students to complete. In fact, they are unable to fill it out without one on one assistance. This takes up a great deal of time, and interferes with the time allotted to plan and develop the activity itself.

Very Special Arts Ohio

Hamilton, OH
Hamilton High School

Project P*ART*nership
Site Final Report

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP
FINAL REPORT
HAMILTON CITY SCHOOLS
HAMILTON, OHIO

This third and final year of Project Partnership saw some old familiar faces and lessons and some new and exciting concepts.

We began the year with a new project called body casting. This art is conducted by a local minister - Father Gary Sterne. The process involves plastic casting and some really gooey setting gel. We all chose to do our hands although a few considered their toes briefly. (A sample will be forwarded later.) The process was slow and a third of the group was worked with at one time. The molds were kept in the classroom until Christmas break when they were taken home as gifts for the parents.

Our next artist was a familiar face and voice. Mr. Ric Carson, storyteller, came to visit for the second year in a row. He brought some old and new ideas for story telling. We used story boards, sequencing and creating our own. Another "old" favorite visited next - Mr. Tom Jordan. This was Tom's third year. He combined activities from the last two years and helped the students create a musical compositions.

We registered to participate in the Hamilton High Arts and Crafts Show held in November. This is a large show with over 300 vendors. Our next project for our artist involved wood cut outs and "friendly plastic" earrings and pins. Samples will be sent of these also. The wood projects were pre-cut and our students painted, antiqued and decorated the ducks, geese, and cats. This took about four days of class time. The "friendly plastic" project spanned a two and a half week time period where we generated almost 500 pieces of jewelry. The success of the sales will keep us participating in the show for years.

The wood projects from the art and crafts show generated a real interest among the students as to how the shapes were made. It was decided one of our in house special educators with woodworking background would conduct a basic class. The project was a squirrel feeder from beginning to end. This item was sold at the arts and crafts show but the students had only done the weatherproofing on these items. This project began with wood pieces, measuring, cutting, sanding, nailing, weatherproofing and filling with food.

We were next instructed by a new face - Tom Sparrough - The Space Painter. Tom brought an assortment of juggling items - feathers, bean bags, scarves, hats and bowling pins. Tom spent five days demonstrating juggling and balancing techniques. The final day was story written by Tom and acted out by students. If was video taped. The theme? The Juggling King, of course.

The next and final familiar face was Ric Wamer. Ric spent five days teaching mime, freezing, slow motion and make up. Ric, as always, was a pleasure to

work with the kids always become enthusiastic mimes. Ric has agreed to come back next school year to do a benefit performance at the new Hamilton - Fairfield Arts Center. Proceeds will be used to continue to bring resident artist to Hamilton High Special Education classes after the grant ceases.

Our summer plans sent 3 student to art classes at the Arts Center in drawing and water colors and jewelry making. We had three students who have participated in the three years of the program and one of these students was the representative on the steering committee. Scott was chosen from 50 entrants from all over southwestern Ohio to receive the "I Can" award and will represent our area in Columbus this summer. His participation in Very Special Arts was included in his registration and resume for the ward. Our class composition consisted of students from the Developmentally Handicapped, Multiply Handicapped, Orthopedically Handicapped and Hearing Impaired areas. Our ability ranged from pre-kindergarten to college bound. We plan to continue the program with grant nominees as lon as possible for the 1993-94 school year. Our fund raising projects to continue our own Very Special Arts Programs will consist of participation in the Hamilton High Arts and Crafts show with student made projects and the benefit performance by Ric Wamer.

Our first suggestion for improvement would be, of course, to continue the grant for another three years. W, the teachers, students and artists, have all become very comfortable with art classes and instruction. Each year it has become easier to plan and implement.

Once again we eagerly started with the beginning of the school year and were out of money by January. We would like to suggest a constant flow of monies possibly monthly payments beginning in September to other participating school to ensure a year long program. We appreciate the "free hand" to set up what best suited our educational needs. Even though our parent participation was minimal, our teachers and artist's' caring and enthusiasm made for a successful cohesive program.

We would like to thank Very Special Arts, Project Partnership, The Kennedy Foundation and the United States Department of Education for selecting Hamilton to participate in this very special project. We hope our contributions will enable other school districts to enjoy a similar program with their special students. Our hope is that this type of program will someday become the norm rather the exception.

Thank You,

Stephany Carson
Teresa Adkins
Bernard Solomon
Hamilton City Schools

Very Special Arts Ohio

Wayne County, OH
Wayne Arts Center/
Wayne County Schools

Project *PART*nership
Site Final Report

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP
FINAL REPORT
WAYNE COUNTY SCHOOLS

I. NARRATIVE:

OVERVIEW

In the fall of 1992, Wayne County Schools began year two of Project PARTnership (year three Very Special Arts). Working with County Office staff and Wayne County School Administrators, the Project Coordinators identified three special education units to participate in the project. Thirty students from all seven Wayne County Local School Districts (Chippewa, Dalton, Green, North Central, Northwestern, Southeast, Triway), and Wooster City Schools, Orrville City Schools, and Rittman Exempted-Village Schools were represented in the three special education units selected.

APPENDIX A

Continuing with the success of the first year of Project PARTnership, Project Coordinators, Gary DeVault, Fine Arts Coordinator, and Carolyne Haynes, Special Education Coordinator:

1. Established a Steering Committee **APPENDIX B**

2. Completed the Preliminary Site Assessment. **APPENDIX C**

3. Conducted a curriculum training session for participating special education teachers, arts specialists, and artists - Tuesday, January 19, 1993. **APPENDIX D**

4. Developed the schedule of arts classes: twelve weekly sessions covering two arts disciplines each week. The course began on Thursday, November 12, 1992 and ended April 2, 1993. The majority of the arts classes were held at the Wayne Center for the Arts, Wooster, Ohio. Additional classes were held at Smithville High School; Wayne General College, a branch of the University of Akron; and at the electronic music lab, Hazel Harvey Elementary School, Doylestown, Ohio. Field trip experiences included: serving as ushers, guides & helpers for *Amahl and The Night Visitors*, Canton Symphony Orchestra, the Akron Museum of Art and Quaker Square. In anticipation of expanding Project PART nership in year three, Project Coordinators arranged to include additional special education units from Wayne dale High School, Rittman High School, and Wooster High School in four Project PART nership activities. **APPENDIX E**

5. Developed the project budget. **APPENDIX F**

6. Identified and contracted visiting artists: Rick Wamer, Mime, Columbus, Ohio and Fairmount Theatre for the Deaf, Drama/Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio. **APPENDIX G**

7. Worked with special education teachers on the use of Wayne County's Individual Education Plan to include documentation of program options and related services for mainstreaming special needs students into arts classes. **APPENDIX H**

8. Presented a session at the Ohio Department of Educations' Conference on Teaching and Learning on February 23, 1993 titled "Through the Arts to Self Actualization: Empowering Special Needs Populations." **APPENDIX I**

9. Continued correspondance with parents, educators, and general public. **APPENDIX J**

10. Participated in the third party evaluation conducted by Gila Schuster on April 21, 1993.

SITE ASSESSMENT

- **The most significant barriers to student participation in the arts:**

Scheduling conflicts - In most small, rural schools most arts courses are single course offerings, thus limiting the number of opportunities for students to elect arts courses.

Student confidence - Students with special needs generally lack the confidence necessary to sign-up for regularly scheduled arts courses.

Class size limits - Special education students are usually the first to get closed out of a class.

Number of arts teachers - In most rural high schools the arts staff (one vocal music, one instrumental (often teaching 7 - 12 or 5 - 12) and one visual art teacher) is at a minimum. Emphasis tends to be on the performance groups. (Marching band for athletic events, etc.)

Vocational Career programs do not offer any arts opportunities for students.

- **Did the project help to reduce or eliminate any of these barriers?**

Participation in Project P*ART*nership has increased awareness of Wayne County Schools administrators, special education teachers, arts teachers, parents and the community.

Some students who participated in the project have elected to participate in regularly scheduled arts courses for the 1993 - 94 school year.

- **Recommendations:**

Continue providing information and increased awareness with administrators, board of education members, special education teachers, arts teachers, classroom teachers at all levels, parents and the community.

Offer presentations at teacher inservices, monthly arts teachers meetings, administrators meetings, etc.

Research and investigate the pros and cons of offering arts opportunities at the vocational career center. Encourage vocational students to participate in home school extra-curricular arts activities and community arts opportunities.

Encourage the Wayne Center for the Arts to offer more community arts opportunities for students (adults) with special needs. (In progress)

STEERING COMMITTEE

* **Steering Committee activities:**

Project coordinators identified potential steering committee members following the VSA recommended listing, invited participation and conducted one formal Steering Committee Meeting: May 6, 1993. Through written, phone and personal contact the Steering Committee members informally provided input into the Wayne County Schools Plan, reviewed the Preliminary Site Assessment information and approved the project budget. Steering Committee members received a special invitation to attend the final reception activity on April 2, 1993. At the May 6th meeting Steering Committee members viewed student artwork and photo documentation of the project activities, viewed the Kennedy Center video, reviewed the project expenses and revised budget, and discussed in length project goals for the '93 - '94 school year. The Steering Committee approved the Project P*ART*nership year three plan and recommend that the project become a program component of the Wayne County Schools' Arts Education Advisory Committee founded in 1989. **APPENDIX K**

* **Were people with disabilities included?**

Yes. We were somewhat uncomfortable with the identification of "disabled" artist. Because of our rural nature, we had limited people with disabilities (artists) to choose from.

* **Was it an effective structure?**

Somewhat. Due to the multiple district approach and short timeline, the major decisions concerning implementation of the project needed to be made by the Project Coordinators.

* **How could it be improved?**

A better understanding of school formats in the way the grant was set-up is necessary. Steering Committee planning should have been conducted in the second semester - with the course occuring at the start of a new school year. ALL school districts complete course selection and scheduling in the spring for the following year. Trying to implement a new course option in the middle of the school year (with multiple districts) was virtually impossible and not practical. Arts Specialists were locked into existing schedules.

- **Recommendations to future sites:**

Make a conscious effort to allow for more pre-planning time in initial project structure. The Steering Committee needs to be kept "actively" involved throughout the entire project. Realisitic expectations would include more involvement in class visitations, input in visiting artists selection, reception planning/hosting, and community presentations/outreach.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

Wayne County's current Individual Education Plan form includes documentation of program options and related services for mainstreaming special needs students into regular arts classes. It has not been necessary to develop a separate Individual **ARTS** Education Plan.

Students have been encouraged to take elective arts courses for the 1993 - 94 school year. Discussion concerning "general" arts course offerings is underway.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING

- **What problems were involved in scheduling the core course?**

A better understanding of school formats in the way the grant was set-up is necessary. ALL school districts complete course selection and scheduling in the spring for the following year. Trying to implement a new course option in the middle of the school year (with multiple districts) is virtually impossible and not practical. Arts Specialists are locked into existing schedules.

Once the Project Coordinators determined available options, met with identified school administrators, special education teachers, potential arts teachers, determined location (Wayne Center for the Arts), and developed the Wayne County Schools Plan, there were no problems in scheduling the core course.

- **How were scheduling problems resolved?**

Not applicable.

- **Were special arrangements made for participating students?**

The two special education units selected to participate in the Wayne County Schools project were primarily self-contained so only minor adjustments in student and teacher scheduling was necessary. Participating vocational students were "pulled-out" of their regularly scheduled academic classes or labs. Because these students were higher level LD/DH students with good academic standing, there were no problems with teachers. Students were bused to the Wayne Center for the Arts. On several occasions, optional lunch arrangements were necessary.

- **Recommendations:**

Early notification, plan ahead, meet with administrators, special education teachers, arts teachers, and any other "affected" staff on a personal basis. Make an effort to communicate the on-going progress throughout the planning stages of scheduling the course.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

* **How were parents involved in the project?**

Parent involvement was limited. Parents received written notification about the project goals and objectives and the Wayne County PROJECT P*ART* NERSHIP Publication. Parental permission for student participation was required and parents received an invitation to attend the final reception activity. Parental participation in year two nearly tripled.

* **Barriers to parent involvement:**

There seems to be a lack of understanding and interest by the parents of participating students. Parents generally did not have strong personal interest or experiences in the arts. Job conflicts at the time of the final reception activity limited parental involvement.

* **Suggestions for future parental involvement:**

The Project P*ART*nership Booklet really helped to provide parents with an accurate overview of the program. By design, the pictures in the publication really tell the story. Current plans for a parent meeting (year three) in the fall are underway. Wayne Center for the Arts, Executive Director and Steering Committee Member - Roberta Looney will begin planning for a family arts day involving all Project P*ART*nership students, siblings and parents. It is the hope of the Project Coordinators that this family day, planned for mid-way through the project, will improve parental interest and involvement.

STUDENTS

* **How were students selected for participation?**

Working with County office Staff and Wayne County Schools Administrators, the Project Coordinators identified three special education units to participate in the project. Thirty students from all seven Wayne County Local Schools Districts (Chippewa, Dalton, Green, North Central, Northwestern, Southeast, Triway), Wooster City Schools, Orrville City Schools, and Rittman Exempted-Village Schools were represented in the three special education units selected.

Primary Districts included:

Chippewa Local Schools, Rudy Yaksich, Superintendent
Steve Caples, High School Principal, Chris Cikra, Special Education Teacher
Cross-Categorical Unit - Learning Disabled and Developmentally Handicapped, Multiple Handicapped, and Other Health
Site Location: Wayne County Schools Career Center, Smithville

Green Local Schools, Roger Ramseyer, Superintendent
Tom Rolf, High School Principal, Andrew Spencer, Special Education Teacher
Developmentally Handicapped Unit
Site Location: Smithville High School, Smithville

Wayne County Schools Career Center, Ken Packard, Superintendent
Lorin Weaver, Executive Director, Penny Mendenhall-Stone, Vocational Special Education Coordinator
selected LD/DH students from vocational career programs
Site Location: Wayne County Schools Career Center, Smithville

* **What barriers did you encounter related to student participation?**

Students expressed some initial fear and uncertainty about the project and the arts in general, probably because this was something new and different. (Risking!) We had limited access to students with special needs - primarily Learning disabled and developmentally handicapped. There was no access to Orthopedically Handicapped, Visually Impaired, etc. Wayne County High School students with these handicaps are generally transported to programs in near-by large city school districts.

GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATIONS

On January 15, 1993 students enjoyed a full-day of workshops and performances by the Fairmount Theatre for the Deaf. Two hearing actors/actresses and two hearing impaired actors/actresses led the students through a series of activities focused on risk-taking, decision making, and artistic creativity. In the afternoon session, Fairmount Theatre for the Deaf presented **EIGHT HANDFULS OF MYTHS**, a fast moving and energetic collection of folk tales and myths from around the world interspersed with personal stories. **EIGHT HANDFULS OF MYTHS** was presented from a deaf point of view to give the students a better awareness of deaf people. For this activity one of the Wayne County Schools' Hearing Impaired Units, grades 5 - 8, participated.

On January 19, 1993, Rick Wamer, visiting mime artist, demonstrated the art and techniques of mime for participating students with his performance of "GEOMETRIES". "GEOMETRIES" utilized the wide range of Rick's mime and monologue talents. The performance incorporated engaging audience participation.

Project Coordinators, participating teachers and students agree that the visiting artists component of Project P*ART* nership is an essential and effective element of the total program.

CONCLUSION

The Wayne County Schools and Project Coordinators were encouraged to develop a plan for continuing Project PARTnership after the grant funding was completed. Project Coordinators, county office administration, and the Steering Committee worked on a detailed plan and funding proposal to be presented to all 10 participating school districts. On May 24, 1993, the local superintendents approved the project plan for the 1993 - 94 school year. (See APPENDIX K)

Very Special Arts New Hampshire

Merrimack , NH
Brentwood School

Project PARTnership
Site Final Report

SERESC BRENTWOOD SCHOOL

Project PARTnership

1992-1993

Brentwood School/Merrimack High School

Merrimack, New Hampshire

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Submitted By:
Terri Smith, M.Ed., A.T.R.
Art Therapist
Brentwood School

Program Strengths

One of the highlights of this integrated programming came in the form of a significant change in peer culture between Brentwood School and public high school students. The end phase of Project PARTnership coincided with the culmination of the school year. In this region, it is a peer cultural tradition to conduct a "senior prank" at the end of the school year. This year, Brentwood School and it's special education students became a target for the planning of this anti-social act. The intention was for the public high school students to deface the Brentwood School property sign by painting on it "Brentwood Zoo for Animals". To his credit, a young man from the public high school who had been a weekly participant in Project PARTnership with Brentwood students, stood up and advocated for the coded students of our school. He told me directly that he told his public school peer group that Brentwood students were good people, and that they needed to stop bad mouthing them. He single-handedly curbed their plan of destruction toward special education students. The seniors did not deface the Brentwood School property in any way, and hence did not humiliate our students. The young man mentioned here took great pride in relaying his story during a PARTnership group discussion. This was indeed an act of courage and self-determination and is an extraordinary example of the power an integrated environment can have on breaking through social misunderstanding.

There were in fact many valuable aspects to the program. I will list several cited by students, artists, parents, and staff members:

- great opportunity for developing self-awareness
- a chance to clarify one's value system (as in the drama scenarios which focused on teen issues) (opened doors to sensitive topics for some)
- sheer fun and freedom of self-expression
- developing independent thinking skills; exercising creativity
- creating interest in new styles and new areas, viewing life differently, adding excitement and interest to day-to-day routines
- respecting process as having equal importance to products and/or performance
- providing safe ways for students to connect with other people
- providing safety in process (in individual activities and in the overall sequence of how art modalities were consciously introduced to students)
- seeing trust established over time between the consistent class groupings of students. (This was very reinforcing for the adults witnessing their social growth!)
- conversations relating to Project PARTnership and the artworks generated (one on ones and at times during group discussion at an activity's culmination; this later strength was a learned skill that developed and became more relevant as the weeks went on)
- success by example, artists' comfort levels and expertise made for an extraordinary education
- the chance for interaction with others i.e. other students, artists, field trip presenters, parents, media folks, and interested visitors made for great social expansion of our small school setting
- community support (Field trips were absolutely fantastic! The attention to PARTnership students has to be unmatched!)

Program Strengths, cont'd.

- Adult support surrounding the project was steady and warm. In particular, the teaching staff who assisted in each artist presented activity were outstanding in their interactions with both artists and students. The attention to individual emotional needs and/or learning styles truly drove the overall project toward success.
- Youth to youth teaching was a special part of the project (particularly with the student actors and student musicians); modeling, idea-sharing, cooperation and exchange amongst students was a strong element.
- hands-on involvement (taking the abstract and teaching it 2, 3, or 4 different ways; tapping into the varied learning channels of our students, complementing their strengths versus exaggerating their deficits
- making choices
- seeing projects and performances through to completion
- the overall willingness of our students to engage in so many new arenas with new adult faces
- student and parent pride

Program Challenges

As with any new program (no matter how well planned on paper and through meetings), adding the human element, with all it's lively and complicated aspects, brings a set of additional challenges to the surface. The following is a list of such challenges we faced in this setting with our special needs students:

- We always found the prescribed time frames of fifty minutes in the PARTnership to be too short to accomplish introduction, planning sheets, completed projects, self-assessment sheets, and PARTnership group discussions. In almost every case, activity time was lengthened to 2 or 3 days. Where it was not, we found it necessary to eliminate some of the above mentioned stages of recommended process. More time would have further enhanced students' success and in particular, would have allowed for more thorough discussion and closure as each activity ended.

- Several artists articulated concerns with the content of the PARTnership curriculum. We initially asked each artist to field test an activity in the packet. In each case, artists felt a need to modify the existing curriculum, or to develop new activities themselves. Perhaps it is the independent and creative nature of professional artists to respond in this way. I do wonder if a public high school art, music, or physical education instructor would have been compelled to do the same? Regardless, a few artists provided meaningful feedback as to why they made modifications. They felt the content of some activities was developmentally young for high school-aged students. An example was Activity #22. The artist felt she might insult our student population by asking them to dance like farm animals. She also commented on elements of Activities #20 and #21. As dance and movement was such a new modality for all for the students, she purposely chose not to discuss dance types such as ballet, jazz, ethnic, street, or square dancing.

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Program Challenges, cont'd.

She was not interested in presenting dance that required steps or sequences. She wanted to stay away from dance types that might threaten students physically or tap into their preconceived notions of dancers. In such a short time frame, she chose what most closely resembled activity #19, although she still made some modifications. She did not introduce music or sound until the end of the second hour. She did not ask students to break into dyads. Instead, she did entire group involvement exercises, teaching, and practice. Only at the end did she form groups of three or four, and ask them to try choreography. She simplified by having students focus on a single movement (such as breathing, lifting, kicking, etc) and then had them present that one movement in a few different ways (vibratory, percussive, and swing, for example). The groupings helped students in that they felt less conspicuous and more comfortable with more resources and supports. Please note that several students have challenges with poor self concepts and body image. Several are abused children and are only beginning to realize their potential. This artist was extremely sensitive and very appropriate in her pace and presentation. She acknowledged to me that her main goal was establishing trust. She succeeded, and additionally, accomplished teaching five dance movements, dramatic intention, choreography, student performance, and an introduction to modern dance. The artist chose not to perform; instead she empowered students to dance versus watching her dance. This last concept certainly coincided with the PARTnership curriculum of enhancing self-determination skills.

- Even with some modification of existing curriculum, a few artists still felt they could have provided more attention to making learning even more concrete. Abstract concepts are challenging for a number of students, and instructors discussed the need to interweave more concrete examples in their teaching.

- Several artists and students commented that plan sheets or making plans interfered with the flow of creativity. We still held to the PARTnership value of making plans before engaging in activity. I do think that over time, students increased their comfort level with this part of the process, and learned the concept that planning can be a strategy toward achieving a goal. I do not feel that the specific plans they made before each activity really enhanced their work. In some cases, it seemed to inhibit and frustrate them. My comment is that if the students had perhaps been on a more advanced level with expressive arts experiences, they might have been able to draw from a storehouse of concepts and visions to make plans. Without this experience, the students were still trying to understand introductory concepts, and needed to explore the variety of media before crystallizing their plans. They needed the freedom to play, touch, feel, listen, and see possibilities. They needed to practice and make personal choices. The students themselves told me they thought their best artistic concepts came as they warmed up and began to work -- not as a result of planning. To reiterate, the concept of planning is a solid one, particularly in an adult world where an artist may need to propose work, or compete for selection to create, or to perform at a certain site. The students here consistently resisted this phase. They either needed more practice with the planning concept, or simply weren't ready for this advanced skill.

Program Challenges, cont'd.

- There were some environmental deficits at our site. We had cleared a storage room, built make-shift shelving, found some old tables, benches, and broken metal cabinets (for art materials) to fill the room. Given our limited budget situation, this was indeed our best shot at establishing an art space. The students were excited as they had known the old storage space, and indeed, this was progress. I cannot help but wonder if an improved space, with adequate equipment might have further enhanced creativity. At times, students had to limit the size of their work in order to fit into the room with us. They were sometimes inhibited in asking for or getting materials they desired because it meant wading through several people and/or their works in progress in order to cross the room to obtain the material. The table itself buckled up in the middle, causing great movement, and we did our best to remedy this in the second week of activities by bolting wood across its middle. The long benches fell over twice during activities, causing some temporary disruptions. Limited storage space for students' artwork created a great challenge in protecting the selected works meant for the culminating art show. The lack of a sink in the art room made clean-up interesting, although we used our resources to accomplish this task on a regular basis. Because the windows had no screens, we had to choose between fresh air and bugs, or no bugs and stuffy room. The photographer was kind enough to develop our photographs at her studio as we have no dark room. The potter was generous enough to bring a portable wheel to the school for his visit.

- Improved environment and acquisition of equipment would only serve to strengthen programming. It is crucial to point out that the students, artists, and staff members did not once complain about the situation. We cite our weaknesses for your report now, though we were more than ready and willing to face all these obstacles for the opportunity for new learning and fun.

- One artist, the poet, felt that follow-up activities for the class room would be a nice addition to the arts curriculum. Her creative writing medium would indeed lend itself to language arts or other classes, as would other PARTnership mediums and activities. Her point was that self-determination through the arts might be applied to many curriculum areas.

Site Assessment (Including barriers)

Overall, there was great interest, emotional support, and enthusiasm surrounding the project. It generated interest in the 16 school districts in Southern New Hampshire. I was asked to present the project to the Southeastern Regional Educational Service Center Board of Directors. School Art teachers, Gifted and Talented coordinators, parents, and community members who read the newspaper articles all wanted to learn more about the project. We received several phone calls and visitors. The attention to the project was indeed favorable. This undoubtedly benefited our organization. I feel this aspect of the project was in fact held back, due to time constraints on our in-house personnel. We would have gladly responded more fully to this interest, if we could afford the time to do so. These time constraints (coupled with the associated testing and other paperwork) considerably tested the capacity of our already maximized staffing patterns and ratios. The project created a significant impact of time on our in-house personnel.

Site Assessment (Including barriers), cont'd.

Everyone wants similar programming to continue, but no one seems to want to fund it in a way that would make it effective. We feel we would need to add additional personnel to carry out similar programming in the future. We have already tried a grant application to the New Hampshire State Department of Education for next year. The application was dismissed in its entirety. It seems so logical to me that money is best spent on positive, meaningful, and constructive programming with Emotionally Handicapped and/or Learning Disabled adolescents, versus maintenance of programming which, with a hardworking staff, attends more to crisis intervention and turmoil. Bombarding these young people with exciting opportunities and positive outlets for their inner turmoil would serve to turn around operation out of crisis to operation out of strength. This notion is central to my philosophy. I have not yet figured out how to enjoin administrators and budget controllers in this journey toward recognizing our students' many talents and positive energies. Project PARTnership enlightened our in-house staff, and generated great interest from those outside the school, but did not inspire funding for space, equipment, or personnel in order to continue or expand such programming.

An additional barrier arose in working with the policies of the public high school. Only one Merrimack High School PARTnership student was permitted to attend one of several field trips with the Brentwood students. In my opinion, this limitation significantly altered the Merrimack High School students' overall project experiences. The barrier was created due to the public high school's student transportation policy; we could find no way to circumvent it. We were all saddened to exclude the public high school students during these events, as they otherwise would have been key participants in the Tuesday sessions.

Steering Committee

The steering committee was a very supportive bunch. Each member made direct contributions of time and energy, including work done outside of committee meeting times. It is with great respect that I highlight and acknowledge the efforts of one member in particular. Ledina Harris, the student representative (coded Emotionally Handicapped), made considerable contributions in her role as a committee member. Ledina is diagnosed as challenged by Attention Deficit Disorder, with Hyperactivity; Major Depression (including a history of active suicidal behaviors); Alcohol Dependency, and is Expressive Language Disordered. Ledina began Project PARTnership involvement at the age of 15, and in her second month of pregnancy. Her baby is due in August 1993. Ledina articulated great ideas during meetings dominated by adult presence. She was consistently involved in all in-house scheduling, including choosing artists. Ledina worked on articles related to Project PARTnership for the Brentwood School newspaper. She worked hardest of all to type countless poetry submissions, and to create computer-generated graphics and captions which accompanied students' works for the Festival exhibition. Ledina was also involved in creating invitations to parents to view the show and also volunteered to "face-paint" hundreds of elementary school-aged children from the community who attended the festival. Her enthusiasm and devotion was infectious, as other students joined her in each task. Ledina's effort, motivation, skill, and ability to risk involvement certainly enhanced the project. We feel fortunate she accepted our invitation to serve on the committee.

Steering Committee, cont'd.

We remain grateful to each committed member:

Terri Smith, M.Ed., A.T.R. - Art Therapist, Brentwood School
Ledina Harris - Student, Brentwood School
Marilyn Priest - Parent, Brentwood School
Perk Foss - Assistant Director, VSANH
Santina Thibedeau - Teacher, Merrimack High School
Alan Shulman - Architect/Painter/Employment Development Instructor in the Community
Conrad Dumas, M.Ed. - Principal, Brentwood School
Deborah Stuart, M.A. - Executive Director, VSANH
Phyllis Cunningham, Ph.D. - VSA National Representative
Jenn Hartford - Student, Brentwood School

Individual Arts in Education Plan

For the majority of students, Project PARTnership was mentioned in their Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.) documents in a section titled Current Level of Functioning (under the heading of Self-Esteem), and reinforced verbally at I.E.P. meetings, where the students' quality performance in Project PARTnership's self-determination through access to the arts curriculum was highlighted. We often invited students to show off some of their PARTnership artwork during meetings.

In some, but not all instances, specific goals were added to I.E.P.'s for enhancing self-determination skills through Project PARTnership. Brentwood School measures overall progress on I.E.P.'s in four areas: Self-Esteem, Social Appropriateness, Academics, and Long Term/Transitional Planning. Several established goals, prior to our knowledge of PARTnership curriculum, centered on skills that a student could develop, enhance, or utilize in an arts activity curriculum such as this. In numerous instances, we were able to evaluate progress in these areas by considering the student's involvement and response over time, or with a specific medium, artist, peer, or community event. The following are some examples of I.E.P. goals we used where progress was measured by the impact of time spent in Project PARTnership:

- The student will identify several areas of personal strength.
- The student will demonstrate pride in his/her attributes, work, and accomplishments.
- The student will learn to accept criticism and praise in an appropriate manner.
- The student will identify appropriate methods for receiving attention.
- The student will develop the ability to try new activities.
- The student will recognize the existence of, and tolerate the expression of differing value systems.
- The student will follow the teacher's directions.

- The student will attend to the assigned classroom task.

- The student will participate in class discussions.

- The student will explore alternative methods of expressing anger.

- The student will behave appropriately during school-related activities and field trips.

- The student will appropriately share materials with peers.

- The student will be able to share work responsibilities with peers.

- The student will be able to share ideas with peers.

- The student will be more willing to help peers rather than criticize them.

- The student will increase self-assertiveness.

Scheduling

Due to great in-house support at Brentwood, and the support and consideration of VSANH personnel, planned scheduling went off without a hitch. Because our students thrive on structure and consistency, we kept to a schedule of having artists in school every Tuesday for eighteen weeks, with the final day being an awards ceremony. We consistently arranged field trips for Fridays, in keeping with general field trip scheduling in the Brentwood School. Our in-house staff had students settled in class during period one on all of these PARTnership activity days. This allowed artists a chance to arrive, set up, ask questions, see their space, etc. before engaging with the students. The activity or field trip then occurred during periods two through four (sometimes through period five). I processed with the artists at the end of the day, during periods five or six.

There were greater scheduling challenges getting the public high school students involved in the project. A more complicated bureaucracy inhibited the process. Mainstream students were allowed to attend Project PARTnership only during study halls, or lunch periods. Attendance was sporadic, as these students had to arrive late, or leave early in order to accommodate the demands of the public high school. These students were also not allowed to attend PARTnership classes if they were on in-school or suspension status. They were not allowed to attend PARTnership field trips with Brentwood students due to transportation policies and liability concerns. The high school could not provide a bus, and would not allow their students to ride in Brentwood's bus. Significant efforts were put forth by the Merrimack High School Steering Committee member to remedy this situation. She sent individual letters to parents requesting permission, filled out new insurance policy forms for each student in question, and advised us of departure and return times that would be advantageous to the public school schedule. (In fact, we did arrange our trips around these times.) Unfortunately, requests to include these Merrimack High students on each field trip occasion met with refusal. Based on this experience, (for any future integrated off-campus endeavors,) we might try asking individual parents to join us and have them each transport their son or daughter to the field trip location.

Parent Involvement and Response

Several parents responded positively to artwork and comments made about the project in the media. They also had the opportunity to hear their son's or daughter's responses during I.E.P. meetings this spring. Several parents took time off from work to attend the Nashua Art Festival exhibition by PARTnership students. Others stopped by the school to view work or to pick up portfolios. They wanted to ensure that their daughter's or son's work would make it home. The parents placed a high value on the output, and commented that the work might inspire or enhance their child's future.

Enclosed in the appendix you will find two letters written by Marilyn Priest, the Parent Representative on the Steering Committee. You will clearly feel her warmth and support related to the project. In addition, I will relate a short story:

I had sent Mrs. Priest a photograph of her daughter Elizabeth, taken when the Photographer had presented her curriculum here at the school. With it, I attached a brief thank you to Mrs. Priest for the volunteer time she had invested in support of the project. A few days later, Mrs. Priest stopped by to visit. She entered my office and began to cry. She thanked me. She stated that this was the first time since Elizabeth was seven years old, that she (Elizabeth) had allowed anyone to photograph her. (Elizabeth's fears and low self-concept had always inhibited the process.) Her mother was equally thrilled to have the photo, and planned to display it on her desk at work. Elizabeth is currently 17 years old. It was the first photo she had allowed in 10 years.

Parental involvement was an extremely important factor in the overall plan.

Student Selection

At the start of Project PARTnership, Brentwood's population totalled 19 students. All students were selected for involvement in the project.

The project goals and philosophy were then presented to the Merrimack High School Special Ed. Department Head. She directed Santina Thibedeau, a teacher at the high school to select select six students for participation in the project. Ms. Thibedeau selected the students based on high interest in the arts in general and on their willingness and availability to give up a study hall or lunch period to attend. (This was the only way administrators would allow them to join the project. They did not see leaving established classes as a viable option).

Summary

Upon reflection of the project PARTnership Model, it's purpose, and our inclusion of the curriculum in this setting, I conclude that it stands as a solid foundation for further development. I have no doubt that students and our school program benefited from exposure related to the curriculum. I only question whether field testing was given a fair shake in this setting, as in almost every instance curriculum was adapted prior to trial with students. This is, perhaps, more than anything else, a comment on the many years of training and experience the artists have had with populations like ours and their own need for independence and freedom of expression to highlight their own specialities in such a brief time span.

This is not to be looked at as a negative response to the existing curriculum, but rather my wish to applaud the access these artists had to the activities, which inspired them to develop, adapt, or event try out new styles and strategies of their own. Great curriculum was tested and developed in this setting. New found approaches were successful in supporting integration and self-determination skills, as are evident in the anecdotal commentaries.

I thank you for allowing such adult creativity and enthusiasm to filter down to our students and feel privileged to have been a part of this journey with you.

Very Special Arts New Mexico

Albuquerque, NM
Albuquerque High School

Project *PART*nership
Site Final Report

VERY SPECIAL ARTS NEW MEXICO PROJECT PARTNERSHIP FINAL REPORT
JUNE, 1993

OVERVIEW

Project PARTnership, as we were instructed to implement it in Albuquerque, is the seed of a good idea which needs much more development to be a useful arts tool. The project has been valuable to us in New Mexico because it gave us the opportunity to establish a new relationship with a local school, but the project was implemented so rapidly that there has been no time to develop local corporate support to continue the project. We, as is the case with most American schools, are in a time of increasing budget cuts. For a program such as Project PARTnership to be included in the school curriculum on an ongoing basis, more time and better materials are needed. Thus, I feel that we have peaked teacher's interest but have not provided them with the tools to carry on. My guess is that the grant period on this project is coming to an end. My suggestion is that the project materials need at least another year of field testing and that the basic tenets of the program should be scaled back.

The Albuquerque site was implemented at Albuquerque High School through the Special Education Program. Two "D" level ("D" level refers to students requiring separate special education classroom for a portion of the day). Special Education classrooms and a resource room participated in the project. The students were mainly sophomores and juniors. The students participated in activities at the high school, the new ENABLED Arts Center (a studio arts program for teens and adults with disabilities), and South Broadway Cultural Center.

Having served as a model site for Transition to Work Through the Arts, the project which preceded Project Partnership and upon which much of Project PARTnership is based, Very Special Arts New Mexico brought to this effort several years of experience in developing special arts projects at the high school level. This experience and many others in working with the education system have caused our organization to scale back our goals for system-wide change. As we work with educators, we see change in individual teachers, administrators, parents, and students. However, it is very difficult to transform an entire school or school district. With this in mind, it is not clear to me who the potential market for the project materials might be. At the high school level, where classes are in short blocks of time and what is to be learned is fairly regimented, it is particularly difficult to change the way in which subject matter is being taught. It appears that these materials were developed to be included in some type of vocational, pre-vocational, or self-determination component of the high school special education curriculum. This would be a logical choice since most high school art classes are already over-enrolled and have more content than teachers can cover. Further, art is generally not viewed as a basic component of most high school special education programs.

If these materials are intended for a vocational, pre-vocational, or self-determination component of the high school curriculum, much more detail on artistic philosophy and methodology is needed in the materials. The teachers who worked with us in this project consistently reported that the art directions were not sufficiently detailed to assist them in implementing the art activities. Several projects either required alteration or did not produce the expected products. The artists also mentioned frequently that the art activity directions were insufficient. Another area of concern with the materials is that they project powers upon arts education that may be difficult to document. While the arts offer many opportunities for empowerment, decision making, and self-esteem building, it is over-stating the case to assume that the arts will serve these functions for all students. There are so many other factors involved in an individual's education that it is very difficult to trace such changes directly to the arts.

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I believe this weakness was reflected in the results of the testing at our site. The test results do not reveal any significant changes from the pre- to the post-tests. From my knowledge of these tests, they were both inappropriate to the population and to the project. The period of exposure to the arts education strategies was also probably too brief to show any significant change on the tests selected.

We also threw some complications into the project by including our new ENABLED Arts Center in the project. While we provided an orientation for the teachers about the Center, we did not provide an orientation for the students. We made an incorrect assumption that the teachers would discuss the range of disabilities represented by the apprentice artists and the Albuquerque High School students were very insecure about being around individuals with more severe disabilities. The combination of the programs was basically a good idea, but required more preparation.

Thus the overall response to this project from the test site was that the teachers and students were favorably impressed with the results of adding the arts into the high school curriculum and would like to see the project continue in the future. The main concern voiced was that the teachers would either need more training or more specific materials to incorporate the arts into their classrooms.

SITE ASSESSMENT

The high schools in Albuquerque offer a variety of art programs. However, many students in special education do not have the opportunity to enroll in the arts programs offered due to the constraints of their schedules. Time is so precious in high school programs that classroom teachers are often hesitant to take time for the arts. In this project we found that the special education teachers who volunteered to participate wanted to incorporate the arts in their classroom work but did not feel they had the expertise to do so. The students involved were not mainstreamed in the art classes offered at the school although the teachers identified several students as being both talented and interested in the arts.

Thus the most significant barriers to student participation in the arts encountered were scheduling conflicts, lack of information about opportunities available, lack of exposure to the arts, lack of teacher training, and lack of self-esteem and self-confidence that discourages students from enrolling in arts courses. Most students in our model site were receiving vocational training and were focused towards community jobs requiring minimal literacy skills such as fast food restaurants, gardening, and retail sales. This orientation seemed to limit students access to the arts.

By giving teachers the supplies, the assistance of artists, and encouragement to experiment with the arts, many of these barriers were removed. This site was selected because of an interested administrator. Sylvia Abeyta, the Special Education Coordinator, was most encouraging of all the teachers' efforts and frequently provided extra incentives and assistance for the teachers. By participating in the project, students began to see themselves as capable in the arts and I believe would be less fearful of participating in arts activities in the future. Teachers expressed interest in including the arts in their teaching more often after participating in this project. There are few incentives in the high school environment to encourage students who have not traditionally had access to the arts to risk that involvement. The incentives that this type of project provided, supply dollars, guest artists, and administrative support, are useful in breaking down these barriers---particularly if they can be provided on a long term basis. Additionally, training in arts philosophy and specific strategies and stipends for staff are effective in reinforcing the use of the arts in classrooms

STEERING COMMITTEE

The concept of having a steering committee for such a short term project was not particularly effective. Our initial steering met all the project requirements and included persons with

disabilities. However, the decisions about the project were made by the Special Education Coordinator and the participating teachers in coordination with Very Special Arts New Mexico staff. An advisory committee would have been useful in spreading the word about this project, but our actual steering committee became a small group of the individuals involved. Again, within the time frame it was not realistic to have a larger committee.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

Our site was not asked to develop Individual Arts Education Plans for the students as this was not possible within the project time frame. In our state the IEP process is very regulated and arts related goals can only be included in a student's IEP at the request and agreement of the IEP committee. This committee meets only at specified times during the year. It would take several years of training teachers and parents to have arts goals included in the IEP process and then this could only be done if all parties are in agreement. Including the arts in the IEP process would formalize the requirement for arts education, but is not seen as a priority by most special educators in our area. At the high school level, IEPs tend to focus on career related goals and the arts are seen as either supportive or peripheral, but rarely as central to a student's IEP. Rather than relying on the formal IEP process it may be more effective for students and teachers to outline measurable goals and objectives in the arts as a classroom activity.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING

We found this terminology somewhat confusing. As an agency outside the education system, VSA NM is not in a position to be offering a "core course." I would suggest that for dissemination other terminology be used.

In scheduling the project activities, we had to work around the high school schedule. Many of the students in the project only attend school a few hours a day, spending most of their time in community employment. Thus the expectation to involve 25 students in 20 activities was not realistic. We substituted quality for quantity, finding that many of the activities took a week to complete within the limitations of the high school schedule.

What was most refreshing about the scheduling of these activities was the teachers' enthusiasm and flexibility. I would suggest extreme flexibility in future planning for infusion of the arts as high schools have many other priorities which must be accommodated.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

This is probably another unrealistic component of the project. Parents of high school students do not expect to be involved in their children's daily education. Parents in this project were kept informed of the project activities and provided permission for their children to participate. A few parents expressed approval and interest about specific components of the project to the school, but actual involvement was very limited. If this had been a full year project, parents could have been informed about the project through the IEP process.

STUDENTS

Students were selected based first upon their teachers' willingness to participate and then based upon parental permission. The students' work schedules complicated their participation in the project. If the project had been implemented for a full year, students would have had the opportunity to participate more fully.

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GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATIONS

Due to the cooperation of the participating teachers, this project had a very good mix of guest artists and teacher generated activities. Guest artists utilized were: Irene Oliver-Lewis, theatre; Joanie Carlisle, dance; Jackie M., radio performance; Kerin Gitlin, puppetry; Sam Tubiolo, clay; and Steven Chavez, music. The guest artists were selected based on the school's requests for presentations in areas where the teachers did not feel that they had the expertise to implement lesson plans. The artists both implemented lesson plans included in the Project Partnership materials and created new ones. The artists expressed concern about the lesson plans from the project materials: the instructions did not provide enough guidance and many were too advanced for students with moderate disabilities.

Particularly effective were lesson plans in radio and clay. The radio activity gave the students the opportunity to share their knowledge of contemporary music and make critical judgements. The clay mural activity gave the students the opportunity to create a landscape of their community and include graphics common to their high school.

CONCLUSION

We enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this project but have several suggestions:

1. **Initial training meeting** - The videotape is very good and the discussion of the project goals, objectives and procedures is very necessary. Our teachers, however, needed specific instruction in implementing arts activities. They did not have an arts background and the art teachers at the school were too busy to assist. We have a two day training workshop that we offer in adaptive art techniques that would have been very useful for the teachers.

2. **Project goals** - The arts have value in and of themselves. In our efforts to connect and integrate them into other areas of learning statements of about the power of the arts should be kept very realistic. I am sure that the arts will assist with self-determination skills, but this project would need to be more closely correlated with school vocational programs to be adopted as part of the curriculum.

3. **Lesson plans** - As already mentioned, the art directions are insufficient for classroom teachers. The teachers also felt that they had the expertise to determine the specific objectives for each lesson plan so that the lesson plans should focus on the activity and allow them to make the curricular connections. Many of the lesson plans were too complex for the students and the students in our sample were relatively high functioning. Particularly inappropriate was the emphasis on discussion. The students were reticent to discuss the activities beyond saying whether they liked them or disliked them. The self-evaluation component and forms imply students with fairly high level discursive skills. This segment of the program should be refocused using some of the Getty materials on "reflection" and aimed at brief oral discussions.

4. **Time frame** - This program should be implemented over a full year period to give any adequate data. The high school schedule is such that students frequently miss class and scheduling conflicts limit the time available.

5. **Testing** - The tests selected were not appropriate for the students. It is unfortunate not to be able to report back to the students that they grew measurably as a result of this experience. I know that they did from speaking to them: they are less afraid of taking risks. One test that might be useful is the new high school level Test of Problem Solving by LinguiSystems. We utilized the elementary level test for a three year study and showed significant growth.

6. **Direction and monitoring** - The national office did not seem clear on its goals for this project. Since the coordinator left, there was a lack of communication until the end of the project and there was little way to voice concerns or ask questions. Our teachers felt somewhat left out of the loop because there was no communication from Washington. Positive communication from the capitol can be very reinforcing.

7. **Evaluation** - The project evaluations, using the forms provided, reflect either positive or negative opinions about individual activities but does not provide feedback about the overall program. The evaluations attached do not indicate that the staff and students want the program to continue, but I have received numerous oral requests for continued arts programs from both staff and students.

Most importantly this project provided a new site with the opportunity to get involved with Very Special Arts programs. It was not so much what the structure of the program was, but rather the chance to encourage arts participation and enliven the educational environment with arts and artists.

Very Special Arts Nevada

Reno, NV
Hug High School

Project PARTnership
Site Final Report

Very Special Arts Nevada
FINAL REPORT
Project PARTnership

OVERVIEW

Very Special Arts Nevada was proud to be chosen as one of the few model test sites for Project PARTnership throughout the nation. From the beginning VSAN staff, the Project PARTnership coordinator, steering committee members, high school teachers and artists knew this program would be a challenge to implement with a class of emotionally handicapped (EH) high school students who are considered "the worst the entire school district has to offer". This was stated more than once by school district personnel. In initiating Project PARTnership at Hug High School in Reno, Nevada, not only did the students change but a new awareness can now be noted by everyone involved in this program. This will be illustrated throughout this report.

The goal of promoting self-determination, was a big success with these students. Self-esteem, self efficacy, self-motivation were all greatly improved. There was an almost 180 degree difference in attitude from the first class to the last.

The process versus product orientation we very much recommend. We had an art show in a local art gallery which to some was not visually impressive, but the triumph was not in the physical appearance of the art but in the fact that so many participated and so enthusiastically. At the beginning, only a core group of maybe four or five participated consistently every week. By the end, almost every student was participating. They learned that they could succeed no matter what their abilities and some discovered abilities that they were not aware of.

This program served as an education for the teachers. It brought a new awareness of what the students were capable of. It also helped the Hug High School art teacher, who was involved in Project PARTnership, learn to deal with these students on a level that was positive for them. Through an art exhibit at a gallery and a newspaper article on Project PARTnership, the public was educated on the importance of art in the school system not only for the handicapped but for all students.

Project PARTnership also served as a very valuable education for the artists involved. They learned flexibility and patience working with these students, and the process broadened them as artists as well as human beings. Hopefully they will carry what they learned with them into other parts of their life.

The main weakness of the program as we saw it, was the length of time in the classroom. We doubled the visits to the classroom from 20 to 40 and this was barely adequate. These kids have a very short attention span, high rates of absenteeism, and trust issues, all of which took a longer length of time to overcome.

The lesson plans included with the Project PARTnership packet were not specifically designed for an EH population. In general, these kids were average and many times above average in intelligence. The same projects that could work for LD kids were not always sophisticated enough for these kids. Going strictly by a lesson plan in general was not always possible. Flexibility became a key word in our approach.

SITE ASSESSMENT

One of the barriers we encountered was the student's tendency to "act out" certain roles in the classroom that they felt were expected of them. We went on two field trips, one to the VSAN festival and another to two museums to view the art. We saw new behaviors in the students outside the classroom setting that showed enthusiasm, interest in participating, and most impressive was the independence most students showed, which was totally lacking in the classroom. Russell Dudley, our visual artist, came across one of the Hug High students at a runaway center where he was running an art program. There she participated willingly in the program in total opposition to her behavior in the classroom. It seemed that the field trips were a turning point in their behavior. After these trips, the students' behavior much more closely paralleled the positive behavior we had seen outside the classroom environment.

Trust and fear were barriers we had to overcome. These children have very little reason to trust adults because the significant adults in their lives are mostly untrustworthy. Many suspicious questions and looks were thrown our way, sometimes resembling an interrogation. Many students did not participate, either by skipping class or refusing to do the project, calling it "stupid" or being generally disruptive. We observed a great deal of fear from students. When children are constantly shamed, given no positive feedback for their efforts, or ignored, they have a tendency not to take risks for fear of what may follow.

Teachers' attitudes toward the children were also a barrier. The student's habit of playing a role in the classroom was an unspoken rule set down by one teacher in particular. He referred to some students as "sociopaths". He had written off one male student and when this teacher was not in the classroom, the student was much more willing to cooperate with the rest of us. This was totally out of our control, and we learned to work around this teacher.

Lack of discipline and absenteeism was also a problem. Teachers allowed what we considered far too much leeway in student behavior. Teachers made the point that they had very little leverage with the students in terms of consequences to discourage disruptive behavior or encourage attendance.

The key words to breaking down these barriers were time and patience. As we gained their trust and caught their interest, most of these barriers seemed to fall away. By the

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end of the program, 90% of the students were participating as opposed to maybe 50% at the beginning. Students came on a regular basis and looked forward to our visits. The art teacher, whose room we used for our visual artist's projects told us afterward that several of these students were scheduling art as an elective for the first time. She mentioned that she noticed a totally different attitude toward her outside the classroom and that the students socialized much better amongst themselves by the end of the year.

Creating a sense of community among the students would be another suggestion for breaking down these barriers. This we accomplished with field trips, participation in the VSAN festival, an end of the year party, and devising projects where the students were able to interact with each other.

The other two barriers we found to our program were the school district bureaucracy and the confidentiality of the students. Bureaucracy kept us from taking as many field trips as we would have liked, and students didn't always get a chance to attend because each separate field trip required parental permission. We were unable to schedule field trips, such as performances, outside school hours due to liability considerations. Confidentiality almost kept us from doing the art show, but thanks to teacher's research and efforts we were able to do it. Since there was very little that we could do to control this situation, we learned to work around it, and the project coordinator needed to be persistent in reminding teachers each week to jump through the appropriate hoops to get whatever was needed to accomplish what we had set out to do.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Our steering committee consisted of VSAN executive director, development director, president, and project coordinator. Also included were the principal and vice-principal of Hug High, the EH teachers, the art teacher, the artists, Dr. John Beech, a professor at the University of Nevada Reno who has done research on art education in the schools, and a representative from Washoe County School District in charge of Special Education.

We used each member of the steering committee as we needed them. The entire steering committee never met as a whole, even though they were all invited to take part in the training session given by Phyllis Cunningham, January 27, 1993.

Our school district contact and a representative from Art Educators put us in contact with Hug High. We then met with the principal who was extremely receptive to the program. That led to meetings with the EH teachers and art teacher which put the whole thing into motion. From then on, the steering committee was used for informational purposes only. We did not feel that regular meetings of the steering committee were worth the time and effort, and recommend a less structured format.

Another suggestion would be to get the art teacher involved and on the steering committee from the very beginning. There appeared to be some dissension between the

EH teachers and the art department at Hug High and getting the art teacher involved seemed to alleviate this. The art teacher felt less threatened by the artists once she became involved. It also gave students exposure to the art teacher and some of her suggestions to us were very helpful.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

First of all, with participation of parents almost nil, teachers made the point that it would be impossible to call in all parents and get permission to do an individual arts education plan for each student. With teachers as hassled and overworked as it was, we did not feel comfortable asking them to design an IAEP for each child. The performance artist met frequently with teachers to discuss the activity, how it went, and how it could be improved. The visual artist individualized each lesson plan by discussing with each student what he was about to do and presenting alternatives for the student. Our goal was to expose students to artists as artists, not just as another teacher. The visual artist did a slide show of his work to enhance this. We wanted the students to be exposed to the creative side of the artists, their unique personalities, to present a new and creative way of thinking and open the students up in the process.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING

At the beginning, it was very difficult to schedule the core course. We were warned in advance to expect high rates of absenteeism, to ignore foul language unless specifically focused at one of us, to expect outbursts from some students, that many students live in group homes or have very little family life to speak of. The performing artist found that the students were too self-conscious for movement so she had to concentrate more on music, rap, and creative writing, working on the side with a few girls who were willing to do movement. If the program were to continue now that students have a comfort level with her, she would probably be able to prod the kids more toward movement.

The visual artist had trouble with direction and some of the first projects did not keep students interest. He finally had to adopt the "plan as we go" strategy, which meant experimenting on which projects flew and which didn't. Then he incorporated the things that did work into new projects. Projects that seemed to work for this population were those that could be manipulated and shaped with their hands, those with intriguing materials (oil sticks, chicken wire, plaster bandages used first to produce masks, and then as part of a sculpture project) and projects in which the students were able to interact with each other as they might in a family environment. With this population one must learn to be very flexible.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As might be suspected, there was absolutely no parent involvement other than possibly going to view the art show. We elected not to do an art opening simply because we were

afraid none of the parents would show, and this would serve to make matters worse rather than better.

If this program were to continue, it might be worth the time to contact parents once they began to see the benefits of the program to their children. But to be realistic, parent involvement in this case may be nothing more than a pipe dream.

STUDENTS

Decisions to choose who to participate in this program were primarily based on need. After contacting representatives from Washoe County School District and Art Educators of Nevada, both recommended the EH population at Hug High School as the students who needed it the most and got the least. Looking back, the impact here was much greater than it might have been with some other population. Life offers these kids so few things to look forward to that a program such as this can really make a difference, and we feel it really did.

The barriers to student participation and the mitigation of these barriers have already been discussed in the site assessment.

GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATIONS

No guest artists were brought into the program. We felt it detracted from the rapport we were trying to build with the students. If we were to put this program in place next year with the same students, now that we have their trust, there would be more emphasis put on exposing students to different guest artists.

CONCLUSION

We strongly recommend giving students a chance to experience the other side of the art world by having them participate as volunteers assisting artists at a VSAN Festival for special education elementary-aged students . This was a turning point for our program. We saw students really starting to feel better about themselves and identifying it with Project PARTnership. There were more smiles on the kids faces, more self-motivation and independence being displayed than we had seen up to that point. Donna was our biggest success story. To this point, Donna was disruptive, uncooperative and totally disinterested in our classroom activities. She came to the festival with "an attitude", but by the end of that day, she begged to come back and was able to return for the second day of the VSAN Festival with special permission. When children are given the chance to help others, it gives them an awareness of their own value.

Rather than putting the artist in the classroom once a week, we recommend beginning the program with a one week residency. This gives students a chance to get to know the artist and provides consistency and keeps students more focused. At the beginning, each

week was like starting over again - we kept losing them. A week long residency where the artist comes in everyday for an hour and a once a week meeting thereafter would be our suggestion for future programs.

Field trips for this population were a tremendous success. For most, it was their first exposure to an art gallery. We went to an art installation with AIDS as its theme. As we entered, there were several comments about "fags", but after a discussion, the students walked away with a more open mind (or so it seemed). At the Nevada Museum of Art,. one of the students, Steve, mentioned that viewing art would be much better if he was able to take it in by himself. We later found Steve alone, in a room off to the side, viewing the art on a bench by himself. It was most rewarding to realize that some of these kids were really "getting it".

As already mentioned, projects where students were allowed to interact with each other were highly successful. It gave them a chance to socialize appropriately. On those days when we had such projects, a family atmosphere was present, and students gained a sense of community from the experience.

Artists stressed that more time should be allotted for preparation and paperwork and more money budgeted to compensate for the extra time demanded to implement the program. It was also important to hire a project coordinator to initiate this program and to work with the artists, high school teachers and students. Her feedback was invaluable.

Washington Very Special Arts

Washington, DC
Mamie D. Lee School
Spingarn High School

Project *PART*nership
Site Final Report

Project Narrative

OVERVIEW

Overall, Project Partnership was a successful program. The culminating event at Sumner School Museum and Archives on 9 June 1993 demonstrated the enthusiasm of the parents, teachers and students and the benefits the Project had on the students who participated.

Like any program there are strengths and weaknesses. The strongest aspect of Project Partnership lies in the concept of the program. Building self-determination and self-advocacy skills in young people with special needs is essential for their future adult lives. A strong point about the Project is the flexibility of the activities. The instructors liked the fact that they were able to make adjustments and changes as necessary.

The major weaknesses lie in the activities themselves. The artists and instructors said that the activities lack diversity. The activities also are unrealistic for a low-functioning special needs population, especially like the one we had at Mamie D. Lee School. Another major weakness that came up again and again in our steering committee meetings was the lack of *building* in the project activities. We understand that this was only a pilot, however, our committee felt that it would work better if the activities were designed in such a way that they had built from one to the next in order to create a true "culminating" event. As it is, they are sporadic and unconnected. The program needs complete restructuring. Also, asking a school to "buy into" the philosophy of the project without significant resources, we believe was not fair to the school and not a good use of the limited time frame for which we had to work. (This happened with Bell Multicultural High School in our initial stages of finding schools to participate.) The problem was that we did not have enough money to split between administration at the school and WVSA to make it worth everyone's while. Finally, pulling the students with special needs out of their regular classes to be in a class full of students with disabilities, this project supports the notion of segregation. In today's world this is not appropriate, especially for the students at Spingarn.

SITE ASSESSMENT

- The most significant barriers to student participation in the arts that we encountered were the difficulty in scheduling and poor attendance. (Attendance was only a problem at Spingarn.)
- The Project gave the schools concrete lesson plans, outside artists and funds by which the schools were enabled and/or encouraged to schedule the arts into their curricula. We have no knowledge of an increase in attendance as a result of our programming.

STEERING COMMITTEE

- The composition of the steering committee was unrealistic.
- There was one person with disabilities on the steering committee at Spingarn.
- The structure of the steering committee was not practical and therefore ineffective. We had a small group of individuals, mostly art instructors, who regularly attended meetings. We could not force the other representatives to get

involvement to the point where they would show up to meetings and fully participate.
- The structure of the steering committee could be improved by using an existing body of individuals (i.e., parents, teachers, staff) within each school. Also, it takes time to train support. Had we been in each school for more that a year, and had the principal been and active advocate (as in Mamie D. Lee's principal) it would have ensured success of this project component.

INDIVIDUAL ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

- There was no interest in incorporating the arts into an IEP partly due to the amount of effort needed to re-construct the plan and partly because the program fit in with the general curricula. In effect, the arts were just another strategy and there was no need to design a new IEP to accomodate this curricular modification.

CORE COURSE SCHEDULING

- It was difficult to schedule the core courses into the schools' pre-existing schedules for the students. Also, there were more students than could feasibly be scheduled into one course at one time.
- Solution - In both sites, at the recommendation of the National Office, we cut down the number of students as much as possible and then divided the group into different sections which met at different times.
- Recommendations - Choose the sites early on and allow the school administrators to select the students and begin scheduling the core course into the students individual schedules in advance. Better yet, mainstream the program, so that no student needs to be pulled out of class and thus separated from the other students.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Parents were only involved in the culminating event.
- Parents were not able to attend the steering committee meetings because it is inconvenient.
- Choose a few course activities or field trips to invite the parents to attend.

STUDENTS

- Students were selected by the site coordinators with the advise of the special education advisor at each school.
- At Spingarn, student participation was dependent on attendance. (Spingarn has a serious attendance problem.)
- There is nothing that Project Partnership can do to make the students come to school. However, the groups should be smaller and/or the project should be mainstreamed. This would allow for either more one-on-one attention from instructor to student and/or less required supervision/attention because of the "regular" students interacting with the "special needs" students.

GUEST ARTIST PRESENTATION

- The students at Mamie D. Lee spent an afternoon at the City-Wide Vocational Education Conference at Roosevelt High School and collaborated with Roosevelt students to create a mural under the direction of WVSA artists. The finished mural is now at Roosevelt High School.

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- Many of the students at Roosevelt had never before worked along side students with special needs. It was great for both sets of students to interact with each other in order to create the mural.

CONCLUSION - Other suggestions for the future...

- Students like those at Mamie D. Lee are unable to fill out the forms that were provided. Most of them cannot even read. Create another way for the students to evaluate the program and /or themselves.
- The program takes so much administrative time planning steering committee meetings, scheduling outside artists and instructors, planning the culminating event, ordering T-Shirts, buying art supplies, sending memos and press releases, etc., that there needs to be more money in the budget to make sure that all of these things can happen.
- The program should be more about *inclusion*, instead of *segregation*. Redesign the program so that it can be implemented in "regular" classes.

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Teacher's Visual Sampler

Project PARTnership

A Model Program for Encouraging Self-Determination through Access to the Arts

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Project **PART**nership:
A Model Program for Encouraging Self-Determination Through Access to the Arts

VSA Educational Services

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This publication is one product from a three-year demonstration grant to develop a model for increasing self-determination skills of youth with disabilities, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Dr. Michael Ward, Project Officer.

Preface

IT'S HARD TO DISAGREE WITH THE NOTION THAT DISABILITY NEED NOT LIMIT CREATIVITY. Research shows no significant differences between people with and without disabilities on measures of creativity. The long list of accomplished artists with disabilities attests to the wealth of creativity to be tapped and the unique perspective that artists with disabilities have to offer to the world.

Can arts activities increase self-determination skills for young people with disabilities? Project P**ART**nership is based on arts involvement to afford new opportunities to explore and develop a sense of oneself—to heighten confidence and self-expression.

Since the grant that funded Project P**ART**nership is a model demonstration program, only a limited number of sites are able to participate and receive the complete Instructional Kit, but a unique feature of Project P**ART**nership is that it can be applied to many standard arts activities. Thus, we developed this Teacher's Visual Sampler as a taste of the program's framework and a powerful visual stimulus to the wonderful possibilities that result from the concepts, strategies, and techniques required to use the arts to help youth with disabilities increase self-determination skills.

Art can and should be an experience shared by all people every day of their lives; this does not mean that all people must be painters, architects, authors, composers, nor does it mean that they must spend all of their days in museums, their evenings in theatres and concert halls. Rather, it means that people's innate sensitivities to the arts must be allowed to develop and, by encouragement and education, must be given opportunity for growth so that the whole individual can emerge.

[Hayman, 1969, p.11]

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Self-Determination

SELF-DETERMINATION IS DEFINED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. THE AMERICAN HERITAGE Dictionary (1976), defines it as "the determination of one's own fate or course of action without compulsion: free will." Another source defines it as "decision according to one's own mind and will" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1972). Both definitions emphasize the importance of people taking control, without undue external influence, over what affects their lives. Self-determination refers both to the attitudes that lead people to define goals for themselves and to their ability to take the initiative to achieve those goals. Acquiring self-determination begins in early childhood and continues throughout adult life. While the acquisition of these skills is important to all, this development is crucial, though more elusive, to people with disabilities.

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Arts for Self-Determination

THE ARTS OFFER THE MOST COMPLETE EXPRESSION OF THE HUMAN NEED FOR SELF-determination and self-expression. Arts activities help students unlock their learning potential, stimulating their curiosity and originality while creating opportunities for self-expression and individual achievement. Whether it is a simple drawing or a composer's complex sonata, the artistic expression is to shape and define experience, to give it order and meaning, to discover and assert an individual, personal vision.

Art frequently stimulates intellectual curiosity, originality, and divergent thinking. Additionally, art instruction may provide sensory experience as well as encourage the development of perceptual awareness and fine and gross motor skills. Because of its concrete nature, art is an expedient way for students who have difficulty with abstract concepts to grow, comprehend and learn.

The arts are an invaluable learning tool that can be universally used to assist learning for all people with disabilities. Adaptive arts programming in dance/movement, music, drama and the visual arts can unlock learning potential as well as to bring joy and enrichment into lives of individuals with disabilities.

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Activity Framework

A UNIQUE FEATURE OF PROJECT **PART**nership is a curriculum framework that can be applied to many standard arts activities. Teachers and artists can map the **PART**nership activity framework onto their favorite activities. The basics of this three-step framework are described below.

STEP 1 ACTIVITY MAPPING

To provide the teacher/artist with an approach for extending an arts activity to include the self-determination skills of planning, setting personal goals, making choices, demonstrating independence and self-sufficiency, initiating interactions with others, and self-evaluation.

a. Select activity, e.g., printmaking
b. Build on a theme, e.g., living independently
c. Link activity and theme, e.g., decorating personal room through printmaking
d. Focus all elements of art form toward theme, e.g., use of color, pattern, shape in decorating the room
e. Develop action plan, e.g., materials and activities needed to accomplish goal

STEP 2 STUDENT REVIEW OF ACTIVITY

To help each student feel secure and self-sufficient with the activity or art technique through comment or reaction to the art form and what he or she might communicate through it.

a. Think about individual idea and why it was chosen
b. Decide what is needed to communicate idea to self and/or others
c. Determine what is to be learned from activity
d. Resolve any unanswered questions or issues before beginning
e. Create a portfolio of all activity planning, assessments, samples, personal reactions, etc.

STEP 3 **PART**NERSHIP GROUP

To serve as a public forum for self-expression after group sets ground rules and norms for participation.

a. Share individual work
b. Tell others about what is being expressed through the work
c. Give/receive feedback
d. Assess whether personal goals met
e. Assess value of activity

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The Arts

EACH ARTS ACTIVITY IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL Kit increases opportunities for self-discovery, creativity, self-concept building, skill development, individual achievement. Involvement in the arts can lead to social interactions and school and community integration.

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Creative Writing.
Dance. Drama. Music.
Visual Art.

Creative Writing

CREATIVE WRITING ENABLES STUDENTS TO BRIDGE THE WORLDS OF their inner selves and their outer images. Through the writing process students learn to apply an organization to their work and to appreciate expressing dreams and reality.

Through Project PARTnership I learned that you don't say you can't, but you can!

—John
Student

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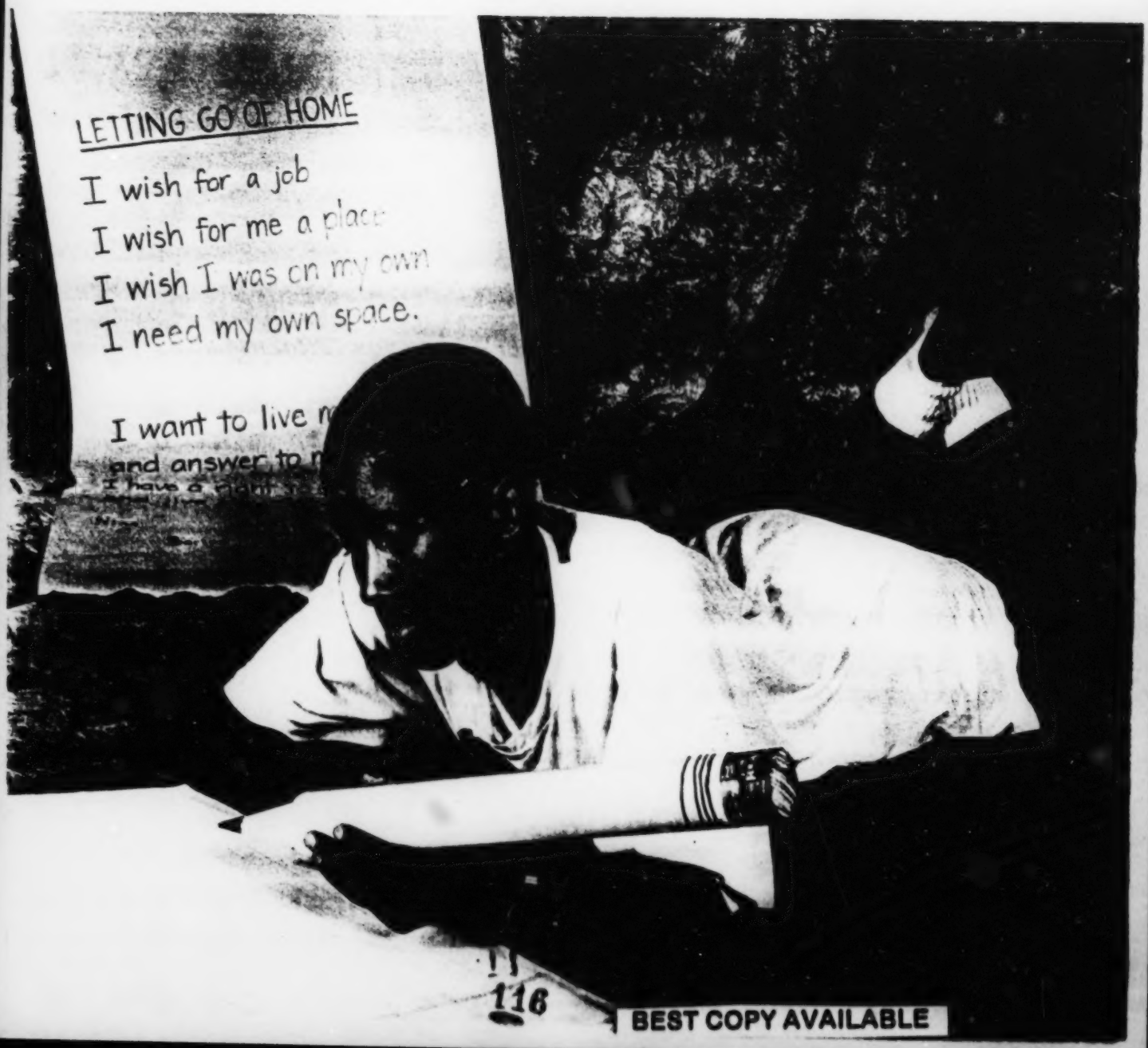

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Dance

DANCE INVOLVES EXPLORATION, CONCENTRATION, AND COMMITMENT even as it integrates sensing, interpretation, and memory. By creating dance, students learn to experiment and take risks. They also practice applying their problem-solving and decision-making skills .

When you participate in the arts, you look within yourself and create what you feel. There is no right or wrong way with art. And when you tap into that, you begin to discover that you can reach your personal dreams. That's what happened for me.

—Mary Verdi-Fletcher
Professional Dancer

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Drama / Theater

DRAMA ACTIVELY ENGAGES STUDENTS IN CREATING AN EXPERIMENTAL environment. It provides outlets for emotional expression and enhances body control. Drama helps students develop their own resources and explore their own creativity.

I learned that you can explain yourself without words.

—Bill
Student

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Music

MUSIC IS A MEDIUM FOR EXPRESSING OUR EMOTIONS. IT ALSO CREATES empathy and enhances understanding. Music allows students to examine in depth who they are and who they want to be.

Music is one of the great pleasures of life. It has the power to command our attention and inspire us. It speaks to our spirit and our inner feelings.

—Gary DeVault
Coordinator, Ohio

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Visual Art

VISUAL ART ENCOMPASSES MYRIAD FORMS OF EXPRESSION FROM painting and drawing to sculpting and collage. As with all the arts, visual art encourages students to draw upon all their resources—including perceiving, critical thinking, and problem solving—as they pursue the creative process.

The artists had a way with these students. They taught without judging and all had great methods that brought the kids out without feeling threatened.

—Martha Hastings
Teacher

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Acknowledgments

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Very Special Arts–New Hampshire: Deborah Stuart, Executive Director; Perkins Foss

Very Special Arts–New Mexico: Beth Rudolph, Executive Director Dana Armstrong, Deborah Mashibini, Pam Musser, Julian Viescas

Washington (DC) Very Special Arts: L. Lawrence Riccio, Ed.D., Executive Director; Katherine Shaughnessy

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Hamilton County, OH: Teresa Adkins, Clinton Bean, Rick Carson, Stephanie Carson, Callie Cary, Hal Gunderson, Tom Jordan, Deborah Kendrick, Sue Samovitski, Bernard Solomon, Tom Sparough, Joyce Zeigler

Wayne County, OH: James Accord, Julie Anderson, Henry Bishop, Chris Cikra, Diana Eschus, Tim Frye, Carolyne Haynes, Jenny Lauber, Carli Moorefield, Leslie Pearce-Keating, Penny Mendenhall-Stone, Mike Peterson, Sam Sheller, Susan Shie, Andrew Spencer, Rick Warner, Karen Wood, Louise Yaksich

Istrouma High School, Baton Rouge, LA: Kerry Curtis, Pudd Carpenter, James Edwards, Donnie Faye Hull, John Hunter, Elisha Jackson, Ramona Laws, Albert Odell, Carrie Sass, Mona Lisa Saloy, Theresa Trelles, Kathie Trouquille, Shala Thibodeaux, William Young, Weston Welch, Bridgette Williams

Warren Easton High School, New Orleans, LA: Gail Armant, Rebecca Bradford, Jean Demas , Roselynne Dennis, Mary DeRouen, Lee Dixon, Rhonda Guillory, Maria Hayes, Candice Kent, Charles Johnson, Ruby Jordan, Andrew Lee, Alexina Medley, Joyce Melancon, Dianne Montagne, Sonya Robinson, Linda Talbot, Michael Torregano, Kathleen Wiegand, Patricia Walker, Doris White, Sherrel White, Lynn Wooldridge, Lenell Young

Hug High School, Reno, NV: Terry Arcularius, Russel Dudley, Mike Ellis, CeCe Gable, Chris McCulley, Susan Walker

Brentwood School, Merrimack, NH: Conrad Dumas, Dwight Graves, Althea Haropolus, Kelly Doremus-Stuart, Laura Campbell, Martha Hastings, Keith Howard, Terri Smith, Mimi White

Albuquerque High School, Albuquerque, NM: Sylvia Abeyta, Roberta Aragon, Leon Bartels, Joanie Carlisle, Steve Chavez, Verna Garcia, Karin Gitlin, Sara Hutchinson, Jackie M., Irene Oliver-Lewis, Zimbabwe Nikenya, Sally Pacheco, Diana Parra, Linda Plank, Tom Savage, Lorraine Solano, Barbara Schwyzer, Shirley Thompson, Sam Tubiolo, Tom Venardos, Susan Williamson

Mamie D. Lee School, DC: Jude Crannich, Malaya Rucker, Linda Suber, Rachelle Washington, Steven Young, Natalie Pratt Zale

Spingarn High School, DC: Janna King, Audrey Penn, Jennifer Rheeling, Ethel Richmond, Malaya Rucker

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